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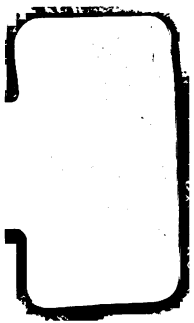

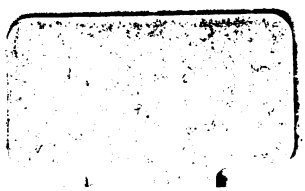

THE WRITING OF NEWS

A HANDBOOK

WITH CHAPTERS ON NEWSPAPER CORRESPONDENCE AND COPY READING

BY

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NEW YORK
HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY
1911

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HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

Published November, 1911

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

CAMELOT PRESS, 444-46 PEARL STREET, NEW YORK

PN 4781
R67

TO
MY MOTHER

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PREFACE

In preparing this volume the author has had in mind the needs not only of students in schools of journalism, but of others who may desire a concise statement of the principles that govern the art of news writing as practiced by the American newspaper. It is hoped the book will prove helpful either as a laboratory guide in the school room or as a text book for home use.

As the title indicates, the book deals with one phase of journalism, the presentation of the news story, more especially with the writing of the story — the reporter's part in the day's work. No attempt has been made to go into other aspects of journalism — the writing of editorials, the administrative features of the work, the delicate adjustment that every newspaper must make between its business and news departments — except in so far as they bear directly upon the subject in hand.

The term journalism is broadly used here to mean all branches of newspaper endeavor. In common with other newspaper men, the author admits

an aversion to the word as restricted to the working field of the men who get and write the news. They call themselves not journalists, but reporters or newspaper men. It is for newspaper men and women in the making that the book is primarily designed.

The nature of newspaper work makes it impossible to formulate an all-sufficing series of rules by which the news writer shall invariably be guided. But there are certain well-defined principles, largely technical, that set apart the news story as a distinct form of composition, and these the author has tried to put down simply and concisely — after the fashion of the news story itself. Going beyond the common practice, there is wide divergence among newspapers in the details of "office style." Methods peculiar to the individual paper can readily be acquired by one grounded in the essentials of the craft; hence only the more significant points of departure from the generally accepted practice have been noted.

Practically all the examples in the book are from published news stories, reproduced in most cases exactly as they appeared in print. In some, for obvious reasons, fictitious names and addresses have been substituted for the real. With one or two ex-

ceptions the examples illustrating right methods of news presentation have been chosen not for special brilliancy, but as fairly showing the everyday output of the trained news writer.

University of Missouri,
Columbia,
July, 1911.

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THE WRITING OF NEWS

. . . But however great a gift, if news instinct as born were turned loose in any newspaper office in New York without the control of sound judgment bred by considerable experience and training, the results would be much more pleasing to the lawyers than to the editor. One of the chief difficulties in journalism now is to keep the news from running rampant over the restraints of accuracy and conscience. And if a "nose for news" is born in the cradle, does not the instinct, like other great qualities, need development by teaching, by training, by practical object-lessons illustrating the good and the bad, the right and the wrong, the popular and the unpopular, the things that succeed and the things that fail, and above all the things that deserve to succeed, and the things that do not — not the things only that make circulation for to-day, but the things that make character and influence and public confidence? — From an article by JOSEPH PULITZER in the *North American Review.*

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THE WRITING OF NEWS

CHAPTER I

NEWSPAPER COPY

This is the age of the reporter — the age of news, not views. We are influencing our public through the presentation of facts; and the gathering, the assembling and the presentation of these facts is the work of the reporter. There are two ideals of news. The first is to give the news colorless, the absolute truth. The second is to take the best attitude for the perpetuation of our democracy. The first would be all right if there were such a thing as absolute truth. When jesting Pilate asked, "What is truth?" he expressed the eternal question of modern journals. The best we can do is to follow the second ideal, which is to point out the truth as seen from the broadest, the most human and the most interesting point of view.— From an address by WILL IRWIN at the University of Missouri.

TERMINOLOGY

All manuscript for the press is *copy*. *Clean copy* is manuscript that requires little or no editing. The various steps in the gathering and writing of news that precede printing are indicated briefly in the following explanation of newspaper terms:

Story.— Any article prepared for a newspaper.

A three-line item and a three-column account of a convention are both, in the newspaper sense, *stories*. The term is applied also to the happening with which the story deals. Thus a reporter sent to get the facts about a fire is said to be *covering* a fire story. A happening of unusual importance makes a *big* news story. Reporters are *assigned* or *detailed* by the city editor to cover certain stories, and the task given each is his *assignment*. A reporter assigned to visit certain definite places which are covered regularly in the search for news (as police stations, hospitals, courts, fire headquarters, city hall, etc.) is said to have a *run* or a *beat*. A reporter *scoops* competing news gatherers when he gets an exclusive story. The story is called a *scoop* or a *beat*.

Stickful.— A term frequently used in defining the length of a story. A *stickful* is about two inches of type — the amount held by a composing *stick*, a metal frame used by the printer in setting type by hand.

Lead.— Loosely used to indicate the introduction, usually the first paragraph, of the story. In the ordinary sense the news story has no such thing as an introduction. The *lead* goes straight to the point without preliminaries. Do not confuse this

word, pronounced "leed," with the word of the same spelling pronounced "led." The latter word *lead,* as a verb, is an order to the printer to put thin strips of metal (*leads*) between the lines of the story in type, thus giving additional white space and making the story stand out more prominently on the printed page. Editorials are usually *leaded.*

Copy Reader.— A sub-editor who puts the copy into shape for the printer and writes the headlines. Sometimes called *copy editor.* Do not confuse *copy reading* with *proofreading* (the correction of proof sheets), which is done in another department.

Slug.—A solid line of machine-set type. As used by the copy reader, the term usually means the identifying name given a story, as "wedding," "fire," "wreck." A story is *slugged* when it is so named for convenience in keeping tab on it.

Head.— Abbreviation for *headlines.* A copy reader is said to *build a head* on a certain feature of the story.

Feature.— Noun: The most interesting part of a story is the *feature.* Verb: A story is *featured* or *played up* when it is prominently displayed. Adjective: A *feature story* usually depends for its

interest on some other element than that of immediate news value.

Make up.— Verb: To arrange the type in forms for printing. Noun (*make-up*): The process of arranging the type or the result as seen in the printed page. A newspaper is said to have an effective *make-up* when the disposition of the stories on a page and the general typographical appearance of the whole contribute toward making the desired impression on the reader. The *make-up editor* supervises the work of making up. A page may be *made over* to insert late news.

DIRECTIONS FOR PREPARING COPY

Most newspapers insist on typewritten copy; all prefer it. It can be prepared more quickly than long-hand copy after one has mastered the use of the machine; it makes for accuracy; it is easier to edit, and, because of its uniform legibility, it saves time and expense in type-setting.

Adjust your typewriter to leave two or three spaces between lines, so that legible interlining in long-hand will be possible. Closely written copy is the abomination of the copy reader, compelling him to cut and paste in order to make corrections.

Never write on both sides of the paper. Never fasten sheets of copy together.

Write your name in the upper left-hand corner of the first page. Number each page.

Begin the story about the middle of the first page, the space at the top being left for writing in the headlines.

Don't crowd the page with writing. Leave a margin of an inch to an inch and a half at each side. Leave an inch at top and bottom for convenience in pasting sheets together.

Avoid dividing words. Never divide a word from one page to another.

In writing a story in short "takes," or installments, make each page end with a sentence.

Indent for a paragraph about a third the width of the page.

In making corrections it is usually safer to cross out and rewrite. Be particularly careful about names and figures.

Letter inserted pages. For example, between pages 3 and 4, the inserted pages should be designated 3a, 3b, etc.

Use an end-mark to show the story has been completed. The figures 30 in a circle may be used.

Use every effort to make long-hand copy easily

legible. Overscore n and o and underscore u and a when there is any possibility of confusion. Print proper names and unusual words. Draw a small circle around periods or use a small cross instead.

Draw a circle around an abbreviation to show it is to be spelled out. To make sure a letter will be set as a capital draw three lines under it.

If there is a chance that a word intentionally misspelled, as in dialect, will be changed by the printer or the proofreader, draw a circle around the word, run a line to the margin and there write "Follow copy."

Unless you are pressed for time, read over your story carefully before turning it in.

Accuracy is the first essential of news writing. Above all, *watch names.*

CHAPTER II

THE ENGLISH OF THE NEWSPAPERS

Of the three generally recognized qualities of good style — clarity, force and grace — it is the last and the last alone in which critics of newspaper English find their material. It would be ludicrously superfluous to illustrate here the prevailing clearness of what one reads in the daily press. To it everything else is sacrificed. He who runs through the pages of his paper at a speed that keeps even pace with that of his car or train, and yet understands what he reads, without difficulty and without delay, would give short hearing to a complaint on this score. The same assertion may safely be made of the second of the trio of good qualities. Whenever and wherever force is needed, the reporter, no matter what his limitations of time and distracting circumstances, manages to put it into his writing.

The result is plain — and inevitable. Beauty, grace, suggestion of that final touch which confers upon its object the immortality of perfect art, are nearly always conspicuously absent. We know at a glance what has happened and we get the force of whatever significance the writer has wished to impress, but it is all hurled at our heads in the same wholesale fashion, with the same neglect of "form," that the genuine American is accustomed to in his quick-lunch resort, and, in his heart, really likes. . . . Without intending to be dogmatic about it, we are inclined to say that, if a newspaper's English makes a fair approach to the level of an educated, intelligent man's serious conversation, it will be doing about all that can justly be expected. Whatever it accomplishes more than this is to its credit.— From an editorial in the New York *Evening Post.*

"Newspaper English" has often been used as a term of reproach, as if the newspapers, by concerted action, had been guilty of creating an inferior, trademarked brand of English for their own purposes. The term has been hurled indiscriminately at all newspapers, the good as well as the bad, and young writers have been warned in a vague, general way to beware of the reporter's style. As applied to loosely edited newspapers the criticism is just. It is not true, however, that "newspaper English" constitutes a special variety of language, to be shunned by all who would attain purity in writing. There are good books and bad books, just as there are good newspapers and bad newspapers, and it would be as reasonable to condemn all books because they are written in a "bookish" style as it is to include all news writing in a sweeping condemnation.

No defense is needed of the style of writing in the well-edited modern newspaper. Free from pedantry and obsolete expressions, the English of the best newspapers fulfills its purpose of telling the news of the day in language that all can understand. Newspaper English has not been created by the newspapers alone. It is the language of the people, clarified and simplified in the writing, as

opposed to the language of an earlier day which obscured the writer's thought in a maze of high-sounding words. Newspaper English, at its best, is nothing more nor less than good English employed in the setting forth of news. At its worst it embodies the common faults of writing.

The reporter writes his story for readers of all degrees of intelligence — for the man whose only reading is newspapers and for the man of cultivated taste. Simplicity is the keynote. This does not mean crudity or slovenliness, for while the good news story is written with the limitations of the least intelligent reader in mind, it should not offend the educated reader. In this respect the Bible, the simplest of all books, is an excellent model for the news writer.

In keeping with its essential simplicity of style, the good news story is clear, concise and forceful.

CLEARNESS

Simplicity of structure and diction implies clearness. The story that would appeal to the masses defeats its purpose if not readily intelligible. The average newspaper reader has neither time nor inclination to puzzle over an involved sentence or to

consult a glossary for the definition of a technical phrase.

Scientific terms, if not in general use, should be translated into everyday English. This is true also of legal phraseology and other words and expressions of purely technical meaning. Let your story explain itself. If Mrs. Jones got a divorce, say so; don't confuse the reader with the verbiage of the courts. Get as close to the speech of the people as good taste and correctness will allow. Vulgar and silly slang is not tolerated by the good newspaper, but an expressive colloquialism may be used to avoid pedantry.

In striving for simplicity and clarity beware of dullness. "Fine writing"— the kind that speaks of a barber shop as a "tonsorial parlor"— has no place in the modern newspaper office, but there is a demand for the writer who can infuse freshness and vigor into his story. The style of your story should be simple, its meaning clear and its diction pure. Try also to give it that element of originality and charm that distinguishes the best writing from merely good writing. Newspaper English, as used by skillful writers, displays often, in its well-turned phrases, its quick description and its "featuring" of the leading facts, the touch of the true

artist. For all this the story is none the less, in the manner of its telling, simple and clear.

CONCISENESS

"Boil it down" is an injunction frequently heard in the newspaper office. The requirements both of the public and of the newspaper demand that the story be concisely told. The hurried reader has no time for the story clogged with unnecessary words and trivial detail; the newspaper has no space for it.

Daily there comes to the newspaper a stream of copy from various sources. The local room contributes its share, while the telegraph editor receives scores of dispatches from special correspondents, besides the regular service of one of the great news gathering organizations. It would be neither possible nor desirable to print all of the immense amount of news matter received. The paper as the reader sees it is the result of a process of careful selection. Many stories have been omitted, some of them having been "killed" after progressing as far as the type forms, and others have been "boiled down" to a few sentences.

The news writer, then, should study to be terse. Verbosity merely makes work for the copy reader's

pencil. Try to say in one word what the writer who strains after effect might put into half a dozen. Don't say "devouring element" when you mean "fire." "Fire" is a good Anglo-Saxon word that everybody understands and uses — and it is twelve letters shorter. "A house is building" is simpler, shorter and more effective than "A house is in process of construction." "The society met last night and elected officers for the year" is the simple, natural equivalent of "At a meeting held last night the society perfected its organization for the year by the election of officers."

Wordiness, like bad spelling, is a sign of mental laziness, and the newspaper office has no room for the lazy.

FORCE

Force grows out of simplicity, clearness, terseness of style. The story told in plain, curt phrase is more effective than the story which shows a conscious striving after effect. Diction is important. A strong word lends strength to an entire sentence, while a weak word may spoil the vividness of an impression. As a rule the words that are deeply rooted in everyday speech are stronger than their synonyms of foreign origin. Words de-

rived from the Anglo-Saxon are the bone and sinew of the language. The writer who neglects them for the longer and often more euphonious words from the Latin may add elegance to his style, but he takes away from its power to impress. The reader feels the difference, though he may not be able to explain it.

Brevity as well as force favors the Anglo-Saxon. "Begin" is shorter than "commence." It is a better word for the news writer. Likewise it is better to say "A movement was begun" than "A movement was inaugurated." The latter is a word in good standing — presidents are inaugurated — but let it be confined to its proper use. "Build" is preferable to "construct" when the words may be used interchangeably. Examples might be multiplied, but in the end the writer must rely on his own judgment of word-values, sharpened by a study of good writing.

This rule may be formulated: *In seeking force, choose the Anglo-Saxon word instead of its foreign equivalent unless clearness demands the latter.*

The active voice is usually more forcible than the passive. "Jones succeeds Smith" and "A house is building" are better news sentences for

this reason than "Smith is succeeded by Jones" and "A house is being built."

Short sentences, unless they become monotonous, are preferable to long. The speed with which stories are put together in the newspaper office, especially when the writer is working to "catch an edition," is one factor that makes news writing forcible. Working under pressure, the reporter writes with a nervous, hurried energy that makes for short sentences and quick, telling phrases. He has no time for involved construction and prettiness of language. His aim is to "feature" the big facts of the story — to put what he calls a "punch" into the lead. What such a story lacks in elegance it makes up in force.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOME OR CLASS-ROOM STUDY

I.— A good news story, illustrating especially the virtue of conciseness:

CHICAGO, Nov. 5.—"It is hard to give away money," declared James A. Patten, retired Board of Trade operator, at a Y. M. C. A. meeting last night at Evanston. "A person must acquire the habit," he added. "After that it comes easy."

Then he gave the Evanston association $25,000, with the condition that it raise an additional $75,000 within the next ten days. The meeting opened a campaign for raising a fund of $100,000.

(Note in the foregoing the effective use of direct quotation.)

II.— Simplicity of form and diction adds to the force of the following news dispatch:

LONDON, Nov. 5.— Dr. Hawley H. Crippen, convicted of the murder of his wife, Belle Elmore, the actress, today played his last card and lost. He will be hanged on November 8.

Changed as he was physically, Crippen maintained his composure even in the trying moment when he heard his doom pronounced. At once the Court's decision was announced, a warden touched the prisoner on the shoulder and the latter, without a word or gesture, turned and left the dock. He was conducted at once to Pentonville Prison.

Those who have seen Crippen during his imprisonment say that his bearing has never changed from the moment of his arrest. He sleeps throughout the night soundly and eats heartily. He spends much time in reading. Miss Leneve has visited him in the prison three times.

(All the salient facts of the story are summed up in the opening paragraph. Note the use of metaphor —"played his last card and lost." Touches such as this lift a story above the commonplace. Note, too, that no attempt is made at so-called "fine writing.")

III.— Rewrite the following:

Within three hours after a "ten spot" had been deposited with Chief of Police William Smith as a reward

to the patrolman arresting one Fred Wilson, charged with the larceny of a coat and a pair of shoes from J. W. Morris at a South street rooming house, said Fred Wilson was resting his tired body within the confines of the city bastile.

Morris left the reward and a description of the man who, he said, had taken the articles. Each policeman was given the description and told to look out for the man. It fell to Officer John Haden at the Frisco Depot to garner the loose change by collaring Wilson and taking him to headquarters. He had the shoes and coat in his possession at the time and told Haden that he had merely put them on to wear for a little while.

It is believed that he was preparing to leave Smithton for another haven when arrested.

(The foregoing is a sample of "fine writing." Why not say $10 or "a ten-dollar bill" instead of "ten spot"? "Charged with stealing" is shorter and more to the point than the technical expression, "charged with the larceny of." "Within the confines of the city bastile" evidently means "in the city jail." Other violations of good news style will be apparent after a moment's thought. When in doubt ask yourself: How would I say this if I were relating the incident in conversation? Then write it that way. Be natural.)

CHAPTER III

THE WRITER'S VIEWPOINT

Newspaper work is an exacting profession, because things a journalist has done do not count. Like a hen he must lay an entirely new egg every day.— From an address by ARTHUR BRISBANE at Columbia University, New York.

As many changes have come in recent years in country journalism as in any other line of human endeavor. . . . The pronoun "we" has been banished from the editorial and news columns, and the "slop" and "hog wash" known as "puffs"— that is, fulsome compliment and paid-for flattery — has become obsolete.— From an editorial in the Fulton (Mo.) *Gazette*.

The three notes of modern reporting are clarity, terseness, objectivity. The news writer of to-day aims to tell a story that shall be absolutely intelligible, even to minds below the average — since everybody reads; to economize space to the last degree, and to keep himself, his prejudices, preferences, opinions, out of the story altogether.— From an editorial in the St. Louis *Republic*.

The news writer is the agent of the paper that employs him. As such, in a wider sense he is the agent of the public, which relies on the newspaper to keep it informed of the day's happenings. The story is the all-important thing; the reader as a rule cares nothing about who wrote it or what the writer thinks of it. The viewpoint of the news writer

must be that of the unprejudiced, but alert, observer. He must approach his story with a mind open to the facts and he must record the facts unvarnished by his own preferences and opinions. Comment on the news of the day is the function of the editorial columns. It has no place in the news story. The writer who willfully injects his own likes and dislikes into the story breaks faith with his employer, whose space he is using, and with the public that buys the paper.

The ideal news story, apart from questions of style, has these qualities:

1. It is written without prejudice. It is fair, both in spirit and in detail.
2. It is written from an impersonal, objective viewpoint.
3. It is written in good taste.
4. It has originality.

FAIRNESS

In writing your story remember always that it will be read not merely by a circle of men and women of your own tastes and opinions, but by persons of all classes, of all races, of dozens of different shades of religious and political belief. The daily press is the popular university. Protestant,

Catholic and Jew look to it for information; it sets the standard of English for the masses; for many it is the only reading. The tremendous influence of the press imposes an obligation on the news writer. His story must be simple and direct, so that all can understand; more important still, it must be fair.

Approach every story in a spirit of open-mindedness, remembering that nearly every question has two or more sides. Tell the facts and let the reader draw his own conclusions. Tell all the facts essential to a clear understanding of the story. A story may be true in detail and yet work an injustice by omission. Let your story be fair in detail and in the impression it leaves.

Even aside from the ethical obligation, business reasons demand fairness. No paper can afford to offend a large group of readers by a slighting reference to a race or a religious sect. Call the races by their right names. Words such as "Dago" are forbidden by fairness, by good taste and by business policy.

Before making a damaging statement about a person, be sure you have legal evidence in which there is no loophole. Hesitate even then — go to the city editor for instruction. If you are a corre-

spondent, let your office know the facts — all the facts. Bear in mind that homicide is not necessarily murder. There is grave danger, no matter how convincing the evidence may appear to be, in calling a person a murderer before he has been so branded by the courts. If he is acquitted he has ground for a libel suit against the newspaper that has charged him with crime.

IMPERSONALITY

News writing is objective to the last degree, in the sense that the writer is not allowed to "editorialize." He must leave himself out of the story. True, he may give it, in his way of telling the facts, a certain individuality and power, but he is not permitted to cross the border line between the strict presentation of news and the editorial. Only writers whose stories are signed are allowed to use the capital I. They are the exceptions in modern newspaper making. The average news writer, however brilliant his work, receives only the commendation of his fellows. It is for this he strives, and the satisfaction that comes of work well done, rather than for public recognition. Always in the middle of things, close to history in the making,— and that is one of the fascinations of the "game"— the

newspaper man must yet remain in the background. The story is the big, the vital thing. In it, for the time being, he is willing to sink his personality.

The age of personal journalism in its old sense has passed. In the new era the writer's personality counts for just as much, or more, but he must use it wholly as an instrument belonging to his newspaper and the public. It is not meant by this that he must work always by rule and line, but that he must refrain from coloring his story with his personal prejudices and opinions. Even the "we" of the editorial columns is fast being discarded for a more impersonal form. Most city newspapers now avoid it altogether and the same tendency is seen in the more enterprising country journals. It is still used in a large number of papers published in the rural districts, both editorially and in the news sections, but these are gossipy neighborhood chronicles rather than newspapers in the modern understanding of the word.

Impersonal writing does not consist alone in the omission of "we" and "I." Avoid generalities that are likely to imply approval or disapproval on the part of the writer. If Smith was killed by a neighbor, tell when and where and how he was killed. Don't generalize by saying, "A dastardly

crime was committed." If your story is pathetic it is not necessary to tell the reader so. Let him find it out from the simple, human facts. In describing a pretty girl, don't stop with saying she is pretty; tell how she is pretty — tell the color of her hair and eyes.

Strive always to be specific. With this in mind you are not likely to stray far from the impersonal.

GOOD TASTE

Cultivate good taste in news writing, as in all kinds of writing. Your story is read by the woman in the home as well as by the man on the street. Leave out all revolting details and think twice before you use a word or an expression of doubtful propriety. Good taste distinguishes the story written carefully, with its possible effect on the reader's sensibilities in mind, from the story that runs recklessly into paths avoided in conversation.

Never use cheap slang. One kind of slang, that which is clean-cut and expressive, without taint of vulgarity, may afford a legitimate short-cut in news writing as in speech. An expression of this type, if it persists in the language, ultimately finds a place in the dictionary. It is the other kind of slang, the

vulgar or silly, against which the news writer must be on his guard.

Horrible details are not wanted by the well-edited newspaper. Leave out the three buckets of blood. The word "blood" in itself brings an unpleasant picture before the reader and may shock a person of delicate sensibilities. Most newspapers caution their writers against its overuse.

Certain things are glossed over in our daily speech. This is true in ever greater degree of the newspapers. Horace Greeley said that what Providence permitted to happen he wasn't too proud to report. That is not the working principle of the modern newspaper, which omits some things and edits others. The moral obligation of the newspaper to its readers, as well as good taste, demands the pruning down of some classes of news. "All the News That's Fit to Print" implies this obligation.

It is poor taste to attempt facetiousness in reporting a death. Never call a body a "stiff." Puns on the names of persons, unless they are peculiarly apt or are justified by special circumstances, are to be avoided. The same rule applies to exaggerated dialect put in an offensive manner and to nicknames of the races. These instances further

illustrate the need of fairness and sanity in the writer's viewpoint. Common sense is an excellent guide in many of the delicate little problems of this kind that crop up daily in every newspaper office.

ORIGINALITY

Originality is the quality that gives a news story distinction. Rules may aid, but the power to make a story original must come largely from the writer himself. Many writers can put facts together into a coherent whole. The highest rewards are reserved for those who can tell old facts in a new way.

The main secret of original news writing lies in keeping the impression fresh. Everything interests the new reporter. As he gains familiarity with the work, there is danger that his viewpoint will become jaded. Especially if he is covering the same run of news day after day must he fight against this tendency to fall into a rut. The newspaper has no use for the man in a rut. The reporter who becomes cynical loses the news writer's best asset, the power to feel the pathos or the injustice or the humor of the thing he is writing about. If he himself cannot feel his story he is not likely to impress the reader with it.

The newspaper workshop, unlike any other, must create something different every day, although human nature, from which it gets its raw materials, remains the same through the ages. There is no variation from one day to another in the basic themes of the news, but there is an endless variation in the local color, in the shadings of motive, in all the details that go to make one story different from all others. Take the story of death in a tenement house fire. There is the outline, the basic fact, of stories without number; yet each story, told with its wealth of human, moving detail, has the power to affect the reader as if the theme itself were absolutely new. A dozen houses in the same block look alike from the outside; yet the life that each conceals is different from the life in all the others.

Here, then, is need for originality in the writing of news. If the reporter's outlook is cynical he is likely to overlook the human side of the story for the lifeless skeleton of commonplace facts. His story may be mechanically correct, but it has no power of appeal. Without distorting a single fact, in plain, everyday words, the news writer may tell a story of human suffering that will rouse his readers to generous response. This he may do, not by

editorial comment, but by putting the facts in the most effective, which is usually the simplest, manner. Editorial comment in such a story would weaken the effect. The facts, properly told, are enough.

One word of caution perhaps should be given: In looking for the feature do not descend to the trivial. To return to an illustration just used, don't write the lead of your fire story on the rescue of the family cat and overlook the fact that human lives were lost. Originality does not consist in straining after a feature at the expense of the vital things in a story. Triviality comes with cynicism. The power to be truly original, to put life into a story based on a commonplace theme, comes with the broad, human sympathy that results from keeping the impression ever fresh.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOME OR CLASS-ROOM STUDY

I.— The following story, adapted from a newspaper, violates practically every rule that can be laid down for the writing of news. Apart from its errors of style, it is written with prejudice and in bad taste. Rewrite the facts in half the present space, remembering (1) to be fair; (2) to leave yourself out of the story; (3) to omit revolting

details; (4) to avoid "fine writing" and cheap slang.

Tom Jones, one of Smithton's worthless citizens, tried to shuffle off this mortal coil last Friday afternoon by cutting his throat with a pocket knife.

It seems Jones had filed complaint against John Smith and Susie Williams for stealing. They were brought up in Justice Wagner's court on Friday afternoon for trial, Jones being the prosecuting witness. When he was put upon the witness stand he flatly contradicted himself in statements made in his complaint to the Prosecuting Attorney. When he did this Mr. Brown at once dismissed the case against John Smith and Susie Williams and filed complaint against Jones for perjury, and put him under arrest. Constable Walker at once took him in charge and was preparing commitment papers, when Jones expressed a wish to go into the hall for a drink of water, which permission was given him by the constable. Soon after he had left the room an unusual noise was heard like the rushing of water and on investigation the man was found lying on the floor with his throat cut and the blood spurting like water from a fountain. He stuck the blade of an ordinary pocket knife into his throat and severed some of the arteries, and would probably have bled to death, except for the unfortunate arrival of a physician who stopped the blood, and he is now in a fair way to recover and may yet go over the road.

("It seems" is unnecessary at the beginning of the second paragraph. Instead of "tried to shuffle off this mortal coil" say simply that he "tried to kill himself." Cut out the grandiloquent phrases.)

II.— Note the stereotyped form of the following story, in which the feature is obscured by a mass of routine detail. The story is as lifeless as if it had been constructed by filling in blank spaces in a set form. Although it has certain unusual elements, it is totally lacking in originality of treatment:

After he had been arrested on complaint of Henry Flannigan, 56 years old, who conducts a repair shop at 1000 Center street, on a charge of stealing two revolvers from the shop Sunday afternoon, William Weaver, 18 years old, of 3445 Broadway, turned on the man and accused him of being a second Fagin, of running a fence and of having several small boys employed to steal goods for him.

The police arrested Flannigan and his sons, Henry, Jr., aged 15, and Fred, 14, at their home, 841 Division street, and Alex. Jones, 19, 1043 West avenue. Flannigan denied he was running a "fence" but admitted buying a lot of goods from the boys. They were locked up at the Fifteenth District Police Station.

(Query: Does the average reader understand what "running a fence" means? Why not make this clear? It may be noted that some newspapers insist that police stations be identified for the reader, not by their numbers, but by the names of the streets on which they are situated. Thus, in St. Louis, the Fourth District Station is called the Carr

Street Station; the Ninth, the Dayton Street Station, and so on. The number, as a rule, means nothing to the reader, while the street name gives him at once an idea of the locality.)

III.— In the following short feature story the writer has got away from set forms and produced a readable story. Little stories of this type are highly esteemed by newspapers with a leaning toward human-interest news — especially if they are accompanied with pictures:

CHICAGO, Nov. 7.— Stephen Rheim hit into a double play, although he didn't know it for several days, when his safe hit won a game for the West Chicago High School baseball team over the Wheaton nine last June. In the grand stand was Miss Catherine Smith, also of West Chicago, and a loyal fan. "If he makes a hit I'll marry him," she cried, according to friends, as Rheim came to bat at a critical point in the game. After Rheim's hit had won the game friends told him of Miss Smith's remark and introduced him to the blushing young woman, who explained that she was "just joking." But Rheim fell in love and remained there.

CHAPTER IV

THE IMPORTANCE OF ACCURACY

The surest guarantee for right-doing in journalism is contained in the teaching that right is always right and that it must be done for its own sake. This is the great basic truth to be taught the students of schools of journalism and impressed upon the minds of all newspaper workers. No other "endowment" than this of sound principles is to be desired, either for newspapers or individuals, because both must work out their own salvation in life's daily battle, which is won for the right only by those steadfast souls that fight for the sake of right alone.— From an editorial in the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch.*

The haste and hurry of which so much is made may and does prevent polished work in a newspaper office. But it does not prevent accurate, careful, painstaking work. The history of the world which lay on your doorstep this morning is amazingly accurate; the mistakes in it are few and far between . . . The average high school of to-day turns out a variety of English that the best natured city editor consigns to perdition in seven tongues, and beats out of the aspiring cub without delay or remorse. And in the important matter of brevity and directness of saying what you have to say in the curtest and plainest phrase of which the language is capable, the newspaper is the greatest educator in the world.— From an article by GEORGE L. KNAPP.

A first essential of good news writing is accuracy. The word should be graven in the mind of every reporter and every editor. It is spoken by

the city editor to his reporters almost every hour of his working day. Placards on the walls may call attention to it, as in some offices where, with laudable brevity, the motto is urged upon the staff:

ACCURACY
TERSENESS
ACCURACY

If a story is accurate, if it is written with a nice attention to detail, it is likely to be fair. If a story is not accurate, it is not news in the best sense.

Accuracy implies more than mere grammatical correctness. It means more even than the stating of every fact with precision. A story may be taken to pieces, fact by fact, and every sentence found to be correct; yet the whole may give a false impression. Accuracy means the spirit as well as the letter of the truth.

OBSERVATION

Truthful, precise writing is the fruit of accurate observation. If one would write news, he must learn first to see news clearly and without prejudice. Therein the trained reporter excels the casual observer. The one has learned to observe keenly; the

other, well equipped though he may be in the rules of rhetoric, has not schooled himself in the business of seeing things with an eye single to getting the facts in right proportion. Learn to observe and you will have gone far toward mastering the art of news getting and news writing. Casual observation is nearly always faulty. Take for example the conflicting statements of persons on the witness stand. One man, telling his version of an automobile accident, swears the car was going fully thirty miles an hour, another is certain the speed was only eight miles; one heard the driver sound a warning "honk," another is equally positive no warning was given. Each witness is a reputable citizen and each thinks his version is the truth. The discrepancy in their testimony is due, not to any effort to deceive, but to the common failure to observe carefully.

It is the business of the newspaper man, whose eyes must serve thousands of readers each day, to see rightly what others see imperfectly or not at all. He is subject to the same human limitations as the others, but he must make it his duty, by training his mind and his eye, to reduce those limitations to the minimum. Then, and then only, can

he gather and write news with the maximum of efficiency.

In giving names and street addresses there is special need of accuracy. Watch, too, the spelling of all the words in your copy. Remember the dictionary is made for use.

NAMES

The average good citizen likes to see his name in print, but he is deeply offended at seeing it misspelled. Smythe's name is a thing peculiarly his own; he can never cherish any particular regard for the newspaper that persists in calling him Smith. So with Browne and Maughs and Willson. Their names are not Brown, Moss, Wilson. A reader whose name is misspelled feels, unconsciously perhaps, that he has been robbed of some intimate possession. A blow has been aimed at his individuality. To paraphrase a great reporter of life, his "good name" has been stolen, and as a good citizen he resents the theft.

The misplacing of an initial or the careless dropping of a letter from a name may cost the newspaper a subscriber. Certainly it convicts the paper of inaccuracy in one man's eyes. He reasons that

if the paper is mistaken in the spelling of his name, it may be guilty of other grave inaccuracies in its news. His faith in the paper is shaken. And the newspaper that loses the faith of its readers is in danger of losing the good will that is its chief asset.

STREET ADDRESSES

Care should be taken in the writing of street addresses. The difference between two street numbers may represent the difference between respectability and its opposite. A serious injustice may be done a person by printing his name with the wrong street address. Such a mistake was made not long ago by a western newspaper, which gave an address in a neighborhood of doubtful reputation to a citizen of high standing. As a result of the writer's carelessness the newspaper was sued for libel.

The reporter should be constantly on his guard in taking down the addresses given by unknown persons. Especially is this true with reference to the data furnished by criminals for the police "blotter." It is a common practice of habitual criminals to give as their own the addresses of reputable citizens.

Learn all you can of the city in which you work.

Such knowledge will be invaluable as a safeguard against many pitfalls. The city directory is an excellent guide, but sometimes is inaccurate.

SPELLING

Spell correctly. This applies not alone to proper names. Some news writers are prone to shift the burden of spelling to the man who edits the copy or to the proofreader. Doubtless there are many brilliant news gatherers who are deficient in spelling, but, other things being equal, the man who spells correctly is preferred to him who is slovenly in this respect. Bad spelling, though not fatal to a writer's chances, is often a sign of lazy habits of mind. The precise thinker, as a rule, has too much regard for the tools of his trade — his words — to abuse them. The city editor judges the new man largely by his copy. The story that shows attention to spelling, to all the little niceties of writing, assuredly has a better chance of a favorable reception than the story, of equal news value, that betrays carelessness.

SUMMARY

If any hard-and-fast first principle relating to accuracy can be laid down, it is this: *Get the names*

right. Once this principle is grounded in the mind of the reporter, he is fairly sure to strive for accuracy in all the details of his story.

Persons who know nothing of the inner workings of the newspaper office may profess to believe that stories are written without regard to accuracy and are thrown into type haphazard, just as they come from the writers. Nothing could be farther from the truth. A newspaper that permitted such a condition would be swamped with libel suits within a week. In every newspaper office, certainly in every newspaper office worthy the name, there is an unceasing war against inaccuracy of every kind. The new reporter learns this when he comes in jubilant from an assignment, only to be sent back to get the middle initial of a name. The out-of-town correspondent learns it when he is called from his bed by long-distance telephone to explain a vague statement in a story he had wired earlier in the night. When one considers the difficulties under which news is gathered and the limited time at the newspaper's command, the wonder is not that errors occasionally creep into the news columns but that the errors are so few.

The newspaper as it goes to the reader, though it is the product of many very human persons work-

ing under pressure, is remarkably accurate. A painstaking effort has been made to give the reader a true picture of the day's happenings. Copy readers have gone over the reporters' copy for errors of fact and of style; proofreaders have corrected typographical errors after the matter has been set in type; one or more editors have read the revised proofs with an eye single to detecting faults.

The newspaper, of all modern institutions, is the most human. It is written by, for and about men and women. Its failings are the common failings of humankind. Forewarned thus against himself, it is the duty of the news writer, even while he works with one eye on the clock, to be always vigilant in the battle against inaccuracy — to do his full share, and more, in keeping the columns of his paper free from misstatement of every kind.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOME OR CLASS-ROOM STUDY

The following stories are presented, not for any specific bearing on the discussion of accuracy, but as "horrible examples" of bad news writing in general. Inaccuracy in a news story seldom stands alone as a fault, because if a story is inaccurate the chances are it is deficient in other respects. The writer who does not take his work seriously enough

to get his facts correct is not likely to pay attention to style. The stories here reproduced may serve as a warning against some of the faults pointed out in the preceding chapters.

I. This and the story under II show the absurdity of attempted "fine writing":

Shrouded in deep mystery and in spite of the fact that strenuous efforts were made to keep the details of the affair secret, startling facts regarding the robbery of the Blank sorority house came to light yesterday. The house was entered by a burglar some time during the Christmas recess and some valuable silverware was taken.

But this is not all. Although when interviewed on the subject the members of the sorority refused to give any of the details to the public, some unique traits have developed in the burglar which may enable an ambitious Sherlock to unravel as deep a mystery as has ever puzzled Pinkerton's band of trained sleuths.

(Query: Isn't it about time to give the word "strenuous" a needed rest?)

II. The story of a death was told thus in a small newspaper:

Mrs. Eliza Williams, mother of Mrs. Geo. Brown, was released from her physical surroundings Saturday morning at ten o'clock and called to occupy a building, a house not made with hands eternally in the heavens. She has been in this earth life 87 years.

(Evidently the foregoing means: "Mrs. Eliza Williams, mother of Mrs. George Brown, died at

10 o'clock Saturday morning. She was 87 years old." The simplest style is always the best in writing of death. Say "body," not "remains"; "coffin," not "casket"; "the dead man (or woman)," not "the deceased" or "the defunct." "Burial" is better than "interment." "The late" is nearly always useless. "Obsequies" implies that the ceremonies were imposing; in most cases "funeral" is the proper word. Never use a flippant word in a death story. In all news writing spell out proper names: e. g., "George," not "Geo." Most newspapers use numerals in giving the hour, as 10 o'clock. It is usually preferable to place the hour before the day; thus, "at 10 o'clock Saturday morning." Be careful to refer to the dead in the past tense; the verb in the last sentence of the story quoted should be "had been.")

III. Note the use of cheap slang in the following story:

Fred Smith, a young man about 18 or 19 years old, who formerly resided in this neighborhood but more recently at Jonesburg, had been boozing at the saloon all day and in the evening walked out of that burg on the railroad track. He evidently fell with his head down on one side of the dump and one foot over the rail. The 7 o'clock passenger struck him and mashed the foot. He was picked up by the train crew and brought to town and received medical attention.

(It is seldom in good taste, nor is it safe, to accuse a person of drunkenness. Bear in mind the injunction: Tell the facts and let the reader draw his own conclusions.)

CHAPTER V

NEWS VALUES

The newspaper man is compelled, as the price of success in his calling, and often through severe experience, to learn that only that which is true is "news." There is a popular impression that all is grist that comes to the newspaper mill, and that everything brought into the office is published. The fact is that the hardest task of newspaper work is to sift the truth out of the masses of falsehood offered daily. . . . Daily newspaper workers have neither time nor need to fabricate falsehoods for public deception. Their time and their energies are too fully engaged in trying to winnow out the truth from the ignorant or willful distortions of it with which they have to deal daily. Often the falsehoods are unintentional, and arise from the fact that few people are gifted with ability to tell the exact truth, and nothing else, about what they have seen or heard. But they have also to deal with masses of downright lies, inspired by interest or malice.—From an editorial in the Chicago *Inter-Ocean.*

The foregoing chapters have dealt with news writing in its general aspects. This and succeeding chapters will be devoted to the more technical phases of the subject.

It is not the purpose here to discuss in detail methods of gathering news, but to tell how to write news. The reporter, when he sits down to his

story, is assumed to be in possession of the facts. The problem then is how to put those facts together most effectively. But since news writing presupposes news gathering, a general knowledge of the reporter's work and of what is implied by the term "news" is essential to a clear understanding of the technical side of the story.

THE REPORTER

What the eyes are to the body the reporter is to his paper and to the public that reads it. His work is the foundation of modern newspaper making. Editorial comment illuminates the news, make-up and headlines aid in its attractive presentation but after all the story is the main thing. It is for the story that all other features of the newspaper exist.

No matter what branch of newspaper work one may eventually enter, training gained as a reporter will be invaluable. The men who reach executive positions in a newspaper office without having served a reporter's apprenticeship are rare exceptions. Practically all who have attained high rank in journalism began work as gatherers of news. They learned first to see news and to estimate its values.

A reporter may be able to see news without be-

ing able to write a good story, but the opposite seldom holds good. Certainly the best news writers are those who have learned, as reporters, what news is. The city editor of a metropolitan newspaper holds his position largely by virtue of his ability to pass quick and accurate judgment on the news value of a story. He has a "nose for news" that enables him to discard the trivial in the grist of the day's happenings for the vital and interesting. It is this ability that the reporter must cultivate by every means in his power.

WHAT IS NEWS?

News has been roughly defined as that which interests people. But that definition is too general. A book or a sermon or a play may interest people, but in themselves they are not news. The fact, however, that a book has been published or a sermon preached or a play produced, is news, if that fact has an element of public interest.

The importance of a story in the eyes of the editor depends on one or more of several considerations — on the property involved, as in a fire or an earthquake; on the number and the prominence of the persons concerned; on the distance of the happening from the place of publication; on the timeli-

ness of the story; on the element of human interest. This list is not exhaustive; local and temporary reasons often have weight in the editor's judgment of a given story. To illustrate, suppose a newspaper is waging a crusade against grade crossings in its city. The story of a grade crossing accident immediately assumes an importance for that newspaper beyond its ordinary news value. Before the crusade was started the story might have been told in a paragraph; now it is allowed to run at length.

THE NEWSPAPER'S PROBLEM

Remember, in forming your estimate of the news value of a story, that the newspaper is read by men and women of all classes — by the banker and his stenographer, the day laborer and the college professor. A story is valuable as news in proportion to the number of persons it interests. The account of a great disaster, like the San Francisco earthquake and fire, appeals to all readers. It is the big news of the day, taking precedence over all other stories in the make-up of the paper. News of an increase in the cost of some necessary article of food is valuable because of the vast number of persons it affects. So with the story of a national election, a great labor strike or a declaration of war.

These are the exceptional stories whose importance as news is as obvious to one unskilled in newspaper making as to the trained editor.

But what of the more commonplace happenings of the day? The problem that confronts the editor daily is to make a paper that will appeal to as many readers as possible. The man who asks a newspaper to print, as news, a long dissertation on recent discoveries in Asia Minor mistakes the purpose of daily journalism. Such an article might interest other men engaged in making similar discoveries, but it would be passed over by the vast majority of readers.

Newspapers are often charged with pandering to the sensational. Why, it is asked, do they print the story of a murder on the first page, while general religious news is published in a separate department, if published at all? The shop window of the merchant furnishes the answer: the merchant, like the newspaper, puts his most alluring wares in front. The display in both cases is based on a sound knowledge of human nature. What do people talk about in the evening? On his answer to that question the editor's choice of stories largely depends. Mrs. Jones, talking to Mrs. Smith, tells first about the elopement of a neighbor's daughter.

Not until that is disposed of does she comment on last Sunday's sermon.

Newspapers formerly were made on the assumption that men were the only readers. Now they are made with the tastes of women ever in mind. The evening newspaper, especially, is edited for the women, on the theory that it is taken home in the evening, while the morning newspaper is taken out of the home by the man going to work.

The newspaper is a business enterprise. In order to live it must get advertising. To get advertising it must have circulation and to get circulation it must interest its readers. It can not do this by shooting continually over the heads of its readers. But, while the newspaper reflects public taste, it is generally a little better than public taste. Certain classes of news are suppressed and others are carefully edited. What is done with news on the border line depends on the individual policy of the paper.

KINDS OF STORIES

While the variety of news is infinite and no hard-and-fast classification can be attempted, news stories may be roughly grouped in three large divisions:

(1) The story based on a recent happening of more or less importance in itself, as a fire or a busi-

ness transaction, told without attempt at embellishment. This may be called the plain news story. It is the primary form of news writing. Clearness and conciseness are its first requisites.

2. The story called by the newspaper man a feature or a human-interest story. Into this class falls practically all news writing — except that set aside in departments — which does not fit in the preceding group. Some writers perhaps would make a distinction between "feature" and "human-interest" as applied to news, but since the terms are often used interchangeably, it has seemed simpler to include them under one head. A feature story, then, adopting this as a general term, is a story based on something odd or unusual, humorous or pathetic. Such a story often depends more on the manner of the telling than on what is told. "Human-interest" narrows the definition to the story that appeals to the emotions by its humor or pathos. Stripped to the bare facts, a human-interest story may be without news value; but told with the keen sympathy that comes of accurate observation and a knowledge of human nature it may have an even greater value, that of giving the reader a clearer insight into the real life about him. Feature stories concerning odd or unusual or gro-

tesque things, such as the man with the longest beard in the world or the boy who builds an airship in his back yard, may be only a few lines in length or they may be developed into page Sunday articles. A study of the magazine and feature pages of any metropolitan daily paper will show the possibilities of this kind of story. Almost any subject may be made into a feature story if the writer has the gift of originality.

(3) Department or classified news. Under this head come stories that are grouped by the newspaper in separate departments, as sporting news, market reports and society notes. The extent to which news is classified varies widely with different newspapers. Some include only a few broad departments, while others classify news on many subjects, as schools and colleges, genealogy, women's clubs, etc. When, however, a department story becomes of general interest, it is taken out of its department and placed in the general news columns. This may be done, for example, with the story of a world's championship baseball game or of a sudden break in the stock market.

It must be understood that this grouping is subject to many variations. There is often an overlapping of the three kinds of stories described.

The nature of news, based as it is on the doings of people, makes it impossible for one to put a finger on a story and say: This falls under Section A and is written according to Rule Blank. The classification is suggested only as a guide in the study of news writing.

The interview, one of the most important features of the modern newspaper, is not here listed as a distinct kind of story. It may either form an essential part of a story or be itself a news story of any of the types mentioned.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOME OR CLASS-ROOM STUDY

I. Tell how the following plain news story could be developed into a feature story of a column or more:

BOSTON, Nov. 12.—The third new star to be discovered at the Harvard College Observatory in the last six weeks was announced to-night by Professor Edward C. Pickering. Miss A. J. Gannon of the observatory staff found the star in an examination of old photographic plates taken August 10, 1899. It appears in the constellation sagittarius from that date until October, 1901.

II. Concise, well-told story of a humorous incident, used by the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* as a "filler" on Page 1. Note that the story is not clogged with irrelevant police data:

Two burglars enjoyed a laugh, and a saloon keeper's money was saved by the wit of Joe Johnson, a negro porter, early Wednesday. The burglars entered Edward Krenninghaus' saloon at 3948 Easton avenue, and finding the porter asleep in the back room awakened him.

"Where's the boss' money?" asked one of the burglars as he held a revolver to Johnson's head. "Sakes alive," the porter stuttered. "If the boss kept his money here he wouldn't let me sleep in the place." The burglars laughed heartily and departed.

III. The following story — a mother's account of the death of her son — is a fine example of the best type of human-interest story. It was published in the New York *Sun* (morning), often referred to as the "newspaper man's newspaper" because of the high standard of writing that it maintains. "Study the *Sun's* style" is the advice given to reporters in many newspaper offices. The story here reproduced is by Frank Ward O'Malley. It was reprinted in the *Outlook* of November 9, 1907:

Mrs. Catherine Sheehan stood in the darkened parlor of her home at 361 West Fifteenth street late yesterday afternoon, and told her version of the murder of her son Gene, the youthful policeman whom a thug named Billy Morley shot in the forehead, down under the Chatham Square elevated station early yesterday morning. Gene's mother was thankful that her boy hadn't killed Billy Morley before he died, "because," she said, "I can say honestly, even now, that I'd rather have Gene's dead body brought home to me, as it will be to-night, than to have

him come to me and say, 'Mother, I had to kill a man this morning.'

"God comfort the poor wretch that killed the boy," the mother went on, "because he is more unhappy to-night than we are here. Maybe he was weak-minded through drink. He couldn't have known Gene or he wouldn't have killed him. Did they tell you at the Oak Street Station that the other policemen called Gene Happy Sheehan? Anything they told you about him is true, because no one would lie about him. He was always happy, and he was a fine-looking young man, and he always had to duck his helmet when he walked under the gas fixture in the hall, as he went out the door.

"He was doing dance steps on the floor of the basement, after his dinner yesterday noon, for the girls — his sisters, I mean — and he stopped of a sudden when he saw the clock and picked up his helmet. Out on the street he made pretend to arrest a little boy he knows, who was standing there — to see Gene come out, I suppose — and when the little lad ran away laughing, I called out, 'You couldn't catch Willie, Gene; you're getting fat.'

"'Yes, and old, mammy,' he said, him who is — who was — only twenty-six —'so fat,' he said, 'that I'm getting a new dress coat that'll make you proud when you see me in it, mammy.' And he went over Fifteenth street whistling a tune and slapping his leg with a folded newspaper. And he hasn't come back again.

"But I saw him once after that, thank God, before he was shot. It's strange, isn't it, that I hunted him up on his beat late yesterday afternoon for the first time in my life? I never go around where my children are working or studying — one I sent through college with what I earned at dressmaking, and some other little money I had, and he's now a teacher; and the youngest I have at college now. I don't mean that their father wouldn't send

them if he could, but he's an invalid, although he's got a position lately that isn't too hard for him. I got Gene prepared for college, too, but he wanted to go right into an office in Wall street. I got him in there, but it was too quiet and tame for him, Lord have mercy on his soul; and then, two years ago, he wanted to go on the police force, and he went.

"After he went down the street yesterday I found a little book on a chair, a little list of the streets or something, that Gene had forgot. I knew how particular they are about such things, and I didn't want the boy to get in trouble, and so I threw on a shawl and walked over through Chambers street toward the river to find him. He was standing on a corner some place down there near the bridge clapping time with his hands for a little newsy that was dancing; but he stopped clapping, struck, Gene did, when he saw me. He laughed when I handed him the little book and told that was why I'd searched for him, patting me on the shoulder when he laughed — patting me on the shoulder.

"'It's a bad place for you here, Gene,' I said. 'Then it must be bad for you, too, mammy,' said he; and as he walked to the end of his beat with me — it was dark then — he said, 'They're lots of crooks here, mother, and they know and hate me and they're afraid of me'— proud, he said it —'but maybe they'll get me some night.' He patted me on the back and turned and walked east toward his death. Wasn't it strange that Gene said that?

"You know how he was killed, of course, and how — Now let me talk about it, children, if I want to. I promised you, didn't I, that I wouldn't cry any more or carry on? Well, it was five o'clock this morning when a boy rang the bell here at the house and I looked out the window and said, 'Is Gene dead?' 'No, ma'am,' answered the lad, 'but they told me to tell you he was hurt in a fire

and is in the hospital.' Jerry, my other boy, had opened the door for the lad and was talking to him while I dressed a bit. And then I walked down stairs and saw Jerry standing silent under the gaslight, and I said again, 'Jerry, is Gene dead?' And he said 'Yes,' and he went out.

"After a while I went down to the Oak Street Station myself, because I couldn't wait for Jerry to come back. The policemen all stopped talking when I came in, and then one of them told me it was against the rules to show me Gene at that time. But I knew the policeman only thought I'd break down, but I promised him I wouldn't carry on, and he took me into a room to let me see Gene. It was Gene.

"I know to-day how they killed him. The poor boy that shot him was standing in Chatham Square arguing with another man when Gene told him to move on. When the young man wouldn't, but only answered back, Gene shoved him, and the young man pulled a revolver and shot Gene in the face, and he died before Father Rafferty, of St. James's, got to him. God rest his soul. A lot of policemen heard the shot, and they all came running with their pistols and clubs in their hands. Policeman Laux — I'll never forget his name or any of the others that ran to help Gene — came down the Bowery and ran out into the middle of the square where Gene lay.

"When the man that shot Gene saw the policemen coming, he crouched down and shot at Policeman Laux, but, thank God, he missed him. Then policemen named Harrington and Rourke and Moran and Kehoe chased the man all around the streets there, some heading him off when he tried to run into that street that goes off at an angle — East Broadway, is it? — a big crowd had come out of Chinatown now and was chasing the man, too, until Policemen Rourke and Kehoe got him backed up against a wall. When Policeman Kehoe came up close, the man

shot his pistol right at Kehoe and the bullet grazed Kehoe's helmet.

"All the policemen jumped at the man then, and one of them knocked the pistol out of his hand with a blow of a club. They beat him, this Billy Morley, so Jerry says his name is, but they had to because he fought so hard. They told me this evening that it will go hard with the unfortunate murderer, because Jerry says that when a man named Frank O'Hare, who was arrested this evening charged with stealing cloth or something, was being taken into headquarters, he told Detective Gegan that he and a one-armed man who answered to the description of Morley, the young man who killed Gene, had a drink last night in a saloon at Twenty-second street and Avenue A and that when the one-armed man was leaving the saloon he turned and said, 'Boys, I'm going out now to bang a guy with buttons.'

"They haven't brought me Gene's body yet. Coroner Shrady, so my Jerry says, held Billy Morley, the murderer, without letting him get out on bail, and I suppose that in a case like this they have to do a lot of things before they can let me have the body here. If Gene only hadn't died before Father Rafferty got to him, I'd be happier. He didn't need to make his confession, you know, but it would have been better, wouldn't it? He wasn't bad, and he went to mass on Sunday without being told; and even in Lent, when we always say the rosary out loud in the dining-room every night, Gene himself said to me the day after Ash Wednesday, 'If you want to say the rosary at noon, mammy, before I go out, instead of at night when I can't be here, we'll do it.'

"God will see that Gene's happy to-night, won't he, after Gene said that?" the mother asked as she walked out into the hallway with her black-robed daughters grouped behind her. "I know he will," she said, "and I'll—"

She stopped with an arm resting on the banister to support her. "I—I know I promised you, girls," said Gene's mother, "that I'd try not to cry any more, but I can't help it." And she turned toward the wall and covered her face with her apron.

This story was reprinted in the *Outlook,* under the title, "The Death of Happy Gene Sheehan," with the following editorial preface:

"The 'stories' of the reporter on a daily paper are written under such trying conditions of hurry and confusion that they seldom have, in the very nature of the case, what is called the 'literary touch.' But occasionally a news writer produces a story which has real qualities of vividness, pathos and power. The following account of the death of Happy Gene Sheehan, which we reprint by special permission from the New York *Sun,* belongs to this class. On the morning when it appeared, a group of business men, one of whom has related the incident to us, were riding from Peekskill to New York in a commuters' club car. Several games of cards were in progress, and the rest of the passengers were busy with their newspapers or in conversation. Suddenly a clergyman, who had been reading the *Sun,* rose and asked permission to read a story which he had just finished. He had read

only a few lines before the card games were stopped, newspapers were laid down, and every man in the car was giving earnest attention to the reading. It was the story of Happy Sheehan; and the effect which it produced upon such a group of busy men, not easily to be moved by sentiment, and not at all, except to disgust, by sentimentality, was the best compliment which it could have received."

CHAPTER VI

WRITING THE LEAD

Newspaper English is the standard. There may be critics, who belong to a past generation and who have learned by rule, but for flexible, expressive use of the language the newspaper and the other publications for the masses cannot be surpassed. . . . When scientific or technical terms are employed there is sufficient context to make clear the application. There is no strained effort or laborious use of words to-day. Nor is there a deterioration, as some of the professors of English would have us believe. Newspaper style is simple, direct, concise, instructive and self-explanatory. This sets the standard for the great mass of the public.— From an editorial in the Washington *Herald*.

The method of telling the news story is usually the opposite of that employed by the writer of fiction. Instead of giving the setting of his story and then working gradually toward the climax, the news writer, as a rule, puts the climax in the very beginning — in what is technically called the lead of the story. If three persons were killed in a train wreck he tells that fact succinctly in the opening sentence. There is no halting, no preliminary catching of the breath, but a straightforward plunge into the main facts. Here again news writing is closely akin to

everyday speech. If you were telling, in a hurried conversation, of a baseball game you had just seen, you would begin by giving the score — the result of the game. Then, as time permitted, you would elaborate with details. That is the method of the news story of immediate importance, whose primary purpose is to inform.

A distinction was made in the preceding chapter between a story of this kind and a feature story. What is said here of the lead does not apply to feature writing, which often follows the fictional method of holding the reader in suspense. Neither does it apply to the news story which is told so briefly that a summary of the facts in the beginning would result in immediate and useless repetition in the body of the story.

WHAT THE LEAD IS

The straight news lead of the story that is allotted enough space to warrant the giving of details contains the main facts boiled down in the opening sentences. The lead should be complete in itself, so that the reader may grasp the essentials without being compelled to read the entire story. Remember that your story is not an essay to be read at leisure. It is written for busy men and women,

and its function is to inform, and inform quickly. The average American reader has no time for the rambling type of story that describes the "dark and stilly night" to the extent of a column and then tells in the last paragraph that a man was murdered. He demands to know about the murder at once. Then, if he is interested, he will read the details.

Seldom is the lead longer than a paragraph, unless it is broken up by making each sentence a paragraph. This first paragraph — the most important in the story, since it tells the facts in a nutshell — should be made as concise and pithy as possible. Tell all the essential facts, but avoid cumbersome sentence structure in doing so. Short, simple sentences are the most forcible. Above all, make the lead easy for the reader to understand.

WHAT THE LEAD SHOULD CONTAIN

Who? What? When? Where? Why? It is a standard rule that the news lead should answer these questions about the story. Properly interpreted, the rule is a good one, but it may be applied too literally. The beginner in news writing is inclined to go to the extreme in trying to answer each question in the first sentence. The result is often an involved sentence in which the reader becomes

lost in a maze of participles and qualifying clauses. Here is a sample from a story turned in by a "cub" reporter:

While studying last night for an examination, Miss Sallie Smith, 18 years old, a student in the Blank Business College, fell asleep and overturned a lamp, severely burning her face and hands and slightly burning her father, John Smith, a plasterer, who came to her rescue when he heard her scream, and causing damage amounting to about $300 to their home, 2015 East Broadway.

Here is material for three or four sentences, crowded together haphazard. Aside from its other manifest faults, the sentence is too cumbersome for the newspaper. Don't write sentences that require the reader to catch his breath before he gets to the end.

Sometimes, however, the story is of such a nature that the leading facts can readily be told in a single graphic sentence. For example the following lead of a published telegraph dispatch:

More than 100 men are believed to have been killed by a terrific explosion in the Blank Mines of the Brown Fuel and Iron Company at 4:30 o'clock this afternoon.

This sentence answers all the essential questions. Note that the writer does not begin with the fact of the explosion and work toward the loss of life,

but tells at once, in the simplest manner possible, that 100 men may have perished. This is the vital fact of the story. No words are wasted in preliminaries. Without attempt at ornamentation, the writer goes directly to the heart of the story. It is conceivable that he might have written, in the conventional fashion of those who have formed the habit of beginning every story with a participle:

> Struggling vainly to escape from the poisonous gases that filled every innermost recess, 100 helpless miners, caught like rats in a trap, met death as the result of, etc.

Note the difference in effect between the short, clear statement of fact and the lead that attempts to gain the reader's attention by "fine writing." Get rid of the idea that because a sentence is simple it is weak. The Bible says "Jesus wept." If the average writer were called upon to put that fact into words, he would probably rack his brain for descriptive epithets. Yet the Bible tells it all in two words of one syllable each — a verb and its subject — of more compressed power than a page of thundering adjectives.

When the lead cannot be told in a single sentence without danger of clumsiness and confusion, don't hesitate to divide it into several sentences. In the

first sentence tell the most important thing — the climax — in order to grip the reader's attention. Then tell the other facts needed for a quick understanding of the story and after that develop the story logically.

OBSERVANCE OF STYLE

Your style of writing the lead will depend somewhat on the custom of the paper for which you are working. Some newspapers still insist rigidly on the who-what-when-where-why rule for beginning all except feature stories and short items. Others are departing more and more from the rule. The tendency nowadays on a few well-edited newspapers (notably the Kansas City *Star* and *Times*) is to tell the story chronologically from the start, leaving out the lead or introduction altogether, except perhaps in the case of especially important happenings such as the mine disaster referred to above. This is probably the result of the growing importance of the headline in the modern newspaper. Formerly newspapers were content to use general headings, such as "Very Important," "The Latest from Europe" and "Court News," but the present-day newspaper aims to tell the story specifically in the head. Thus the average news story really is put

before the reader three times — once in the head, again in the lead and finally in the story proper. Doubt of the wisdom in all cases of this double repetition is responsible for the tendency to drop the lead and let the headline usurp its place. No invariable rules as to when this is advisable can be laid down. The writer should study carefully the style of his paper and be guided by it.

LEADS TO BE AVOIDED

It is a good general rule, and one enforced by nearly all newspapers, to avoid beginning a story with the time. An exception may be made, of course, when the time of a happening is the factor that makes the story. Ordinarily the time is not important enough to be put first in the sentence, though it should be told well toward the beginning of the story. Similarly, avoid starting a story with the place. The weakness of the lead that violates these rules is shown in the following sentence:

At 4 o'clock yesterday afternoon, at Sixth and Market streets, William Jones was shot and killed, etc.

Avoid the trite lead, such as "caught like rats in a trap" and "never in the history of." The newspaper writer unconsciously accumulates a vast

stock of convenient trite phrases, on which he is tempted to draw when working hurriedly. A moment's thought, however, will nearly always suggest a better way of expression.

"At a meeting of" is usually a weak beginning, and some newspapers never permit it. Better tell at the outset what was done at the meeting. It is more effective to say, "Three patrolmen were discharged yesterday by the Police Board" than "At a meeting of the Police Board yesterday three patrolmen were discharged." The meeting itself is an incident. The results of the meeting make the story.

Avoid the lead burdened with police data. For example:

> Frank Smith, 23 years old, residing at 1010 A street, was arrested this morning at 10 o'clock by Patrolman Jones of the Fifth District on a charge of stabbing and severely wounding Arthur Brown, 27 years old, of 2510 B street.

Writing of this kind appears to have been copied from the police reports. It is forbidden by all well-edited newspapers. Reserve unessential details for the body or the conclusion of the story if they are used at all. Let the lead tell the main facts unhampered by statistics.

SENTENCE STRUCTURE

Much that might be said further about writing the lead is summed up in the simple injunction: Be natural. Some newspapers caution their writers against beginning a story with "a" or "the," but an examination of the leading newspapers of the country shows that this practice is not generally followed. Strict adherence to such a rule would often cause cumbersome or unnatural sentence structure. Unless your paper forbids it, don't be afraid to begin your first sentence with an article if that is the logical, natural way to state the main fact. On the other hand, avoid overworking "a" and "the." The same advice is applicable to the lead in general, and in fact to all news writing: don't adopt one kind of sentence structure and use it to the exclusion of all others. A series of sentences all built on the same plan becomes monotonous. In this respect as well as in others get variety into your story.

LEADS THAT BEGIN WITH NAMES

By no means taboo the sentence that begins with the name of a person, especially if that name is widely known. Often the best lead possible is one that tells the name of the chief character at the

outset. A "big" name attracts immediate attention. Often it is the only justification for printing the story. The fact that the average citizen sprains his ankle is not news; but it is news if the President of the United States sprains his ankle. The name in the latter case, not the accident, makes the story worth while. In another type of story the name is of little importance; the main thing is the happening on which the story is based. Bear these facts in mind in writing your lead. The ideal story, from the news standpoint, is one which combines big names and big happenings.

When, however, your story tells of an accident in which several persons were killed or injured, put the names near the beginning, even though, considered separately, they are not important as news. In reading the account of a disaster of any kind in which human lives were lost the average reader looks first at the names; he is eager to learn if anyone in whom he is interested was injured or killed. After the Iroquois theater fire in Chicago, one great newspaper devoted its entire front page to a list of the killed and injured. It is a common practice of many newspapers to enclose tabulated lists of the killed and injured, with a concise statement of the nature of the injuries, in what newspaper men call

a "box" to go at the head of the story. This not only aids the reader but simplifies the work of the news writer.

It is possible, in minor stories of unimportant persons, to carry the "featuring" of names to an extreme. Noting this tendency in its staff at one time, a widely read western newspaper issued a rule that thereafter no story should begin with a name. No exceptions were made. The result was strained and artificial writing in the first sentences of many of the leading news stories. At the end of a week the order was recalled.

THE GENERAL RULE

Reference has been made to the advice sometimes given news writers to tell who, what, when, where and why as soon as possible in the story. Investigation shows that if any such rule exists it is not generally adhered to. Facts that come under these heads are often subordinated to make the lead clear or to give the main fact added prominence. Every story must be considered by itself. If any strict rule can be laid down, it is this: Tell the main facts first, as clearly and forcibly as you can. Remember, however, on whatever plan you build your lead, to answer all the essential questions some-

where in the story. The story that tells who, what, when, where and why, and in addition explains how, is likely to be complete. As a reporter, run over these questions in your mind and see if you are prepared to give an answer to each.

STUDY OF 100 TYPICAL STORIES

To ascertain the favorite newspaper method of beginning the story, chiefly from the point of view of sentence structure, the writer examined 100 first-page stories in sixteen of the leading daily newspapers of the country. This is the result, tabulated:

Beginning with subject of main verb	71
Beginning with modifying phrase or clause	23
Beginning with direct quotation	4
Beginning with "There is"	2

In other words, 71 per cent. opened with a simple, direct statement of fact, with the qualifying parts subordinated. Twenty-three per cent. opened with a qualifying phrase or clause containing some feature of the story, as "thanks to the wireless telegraph," "dragged more than 100 feet" and "unless a court ruling interferes." Four per cent. began with a striking quotation, while only 2 per cent. used the "there is" structure in the first sentence.

Of the seventy-one stories that began with the main clause, twenty-two put names first. In nearly every such case the name was that of some widely known person, either nationally or in the community in which the paper is published, such as the President, a governor or a chief of police.

Only six of the 100 stories began with a subordinate phrase in the participial form. One story opened by answering the question "why" in a "because" clause and two opened with "although." Not one gave the time or the place first in the sentence. In no case was the introductory sentence long or involved.

The figures here compiled are instructive in showing that the modern news writer wastes no time in preliminaries, but goes straight to the heart of his story.

The first words of twenty typical leads of the 100 examined, indicating their sentence structure, are here given:

Eleven men were killed . . .
With two of the leading families of Monroe county arrayed against each other . . .
Two chivalrous firemen rescued . . .
Stirred by the disclosures . . .
With the arrival of the steamship . . .
Business reverses are said to have been the cause . . .

Evidence tending to prove that . . .
The United Wireless Station . . .
Three hundred insurgents . . .
Governor Hadley's statement . . .
Sure of a prompt response . . .
A general denial . . .
Declaring the farmer to be the last person considered . . .
President Taft . . .
A verdict of . . .
The results of the . . .
With a dead man at the steering wheel, an automobile . . .
The "wet" or "dry" issue . . .
Indictment of twelve men . . .
Complaints have reached . . .

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOME OR CLASS-ROOM STUDY

I. Straightforward, simple news lead of an Associated Press dispatch, broken up into three terse sentences:

WASHINGTON, D. C., Nov. 19.—Four men were killed to-day by the premature explosion of a five-inch gun at the Indian Head Proving Grounds of the navy. The breech block of the gun, which was being tested, blew backward into the gun crew. Lieutenant Arthur G. Caffee was one of the men killed.

The dead in addition to Lieutenant Caffee are:

(List of the dead follows, then a detailed story half a column in length.)

(Note that all the essential questions are answered in this lead: Who? "Four men," giving

names. What? "Killed." When? "To-day." Where? "At the Indian Head Proving Grounds." The cause of the explosion was not determined, but the writer tells succinctly how the men were killed.)

II. Contrast the foregoing method with that of the following lead from the Kansas City *Star*, in which a dramatic situation is emphasized by holding the interest suspended. (The names are fictitious):

"Fore!"

The word rang distinctly in the clear air yesterday afternoon. A party of golf players watched a ball which went whizzing through the air from No. 4 to No. 5 hole on the golf links at Swope Park. Almost in their line of vision a puff of smoke went into the air. The faint sound of a shot reached them. They saw a man fall.

John Smith, formerly a clerk for the Blank Brothers Coal Company, had shot and mortally wounded himself. Scores of golfers and other persons walking about the park rushed to the spot where Smith had fallen. The first to reach him was Mrs. J. W. Jones of 10 A street, who had been strolling about the park with her four children. She heard the revolver shot and saw Smith fall. The bullet had entered his head near the right temple and passed through.

(The story continues to the extent of a column.)

(This story illustrates what has been said of the tendency, as regards news of secondary importance, to work toward, rather than from, the climax. A news lead of the type in I would have contained the

fact of the suicide in the first sentence. Note the effect of the short sentences.)

III. The lead of another suicide story from the same newspaper in which the method is more conventional:

After suffering from acute rheumatism that had rendered him helpless three years, confining him to his home and necessitating his retirement from active business, John W. Williams, 50 years old, ended his life at 5 o'clock yesterday afternoon in his apartments at 20 West street by a revolver shot.

(All the essential facts about the story are here told in a nutshell. The lead could have stood as a complete story had space requirements demanded that the succeeding paragraphs be "killed.")

IV. Opening of a fire story from the Chicago *Record-Herald* in which the human-interest feature is "played up":

Seven families were driven to the streets and two sleeping infants rescued and carried from their cribs by their terrified mothers in a fire which last night attacked the Catalpa Apartments, 1727–29 Humboldt boulevard, causing a loss of $30,000.

The fire, which spread rapidly throughout the three-story brick apartment building, was caused by a faulty boiler in the basement. The flames rushed up the air shaft, thus attacking the three floors at practically the same time.

The fire occurred early in the evening, before any of the families had retired, and this fact alone prevented probable fatalities.

(Note how the writer has jumped right into the middle of things without waste of words. While the human-interest element is made prominent, other features of the story are not neglected.)

V. Lead showing that good news style does not demand that all the salient facts be crowded into one sentence:

LONDON, Nov. 18.—An army of 350 militant suffragettes tried to storm Parliament Friday. Charging with Amazonian fury against the double line of police about the building, they made half a dozen attempts to break through the cordon. Six women were arrested.

VI. Lead from the New York *Sun* which begins with a direct quotation:

"If hell stood in need of a king or queen there are people on earth to-day who could take the job and hold it down," said Bishop Quayle of the Methodist Church, in a sermon he preached yesterday morning in the Washington Heights Church. Bishop Quayle, a product of Kansas City, is considered "a typical man of the West," one who not only ventures to slap another man on the back, but whom another Westerner would dare slap on the back.

(Here the news writer has called attention to his story by picking out and "featuring" a striking

sentiment from the speaker's remarks. The second sentence skillfully characterizes the speaker and conveys the idea that here is no stereotyped report of a sermon, as the reader might have feared, but a pleasant, informal summary of its most interesting points.)

VII. In which the story is summarized in a short opening quotation:

LAREDO, TEX., Nov. 19.—"Mexico to-night faces the most serious crisis in recent years."

The foregoing statement made to-night by United States Consul Garrett at Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, just across the border, summarizes the situation as it exists now along the frontier.

VIII. Illustrating the use of direct quotation in the lead to give the "atmosphere" of an interview:

NEW YORK, Nov. 18.—"This is the age of woman, the domestic pet. Also it is the age of gold, which is necessary to the proper coddling of domestic pets."

This is one of the ideas which Miss Margaret McMillan has come to America to lecture about. Miss McMillan is not "another of those English suffragists." She was born in Westchester, N. Y., and is an authority in England on the education and needs of children.

IX. Lead in which the feature is put in indirect quotation:

BALTIMORE, Nov. 12.—Drinking and cigarette smoking are not on the increase among the women of

America, according to Lillian M. N. Stevens, president of the National Women's Christian Temperance Union. Addressing the annual convention of the organization here to-day, she said in part:

(Direct quotation follows.)

X. The chronological method of telling a story which is so short that a summary of the facts in a formal lead would be useless:

NYACK, N. Y., Oct. 27.— Joseph de Bonti, an 8-year-old boy of Haverstraw, before starting for school put a revolver cartridge in his mouth and began biting on it.

The cartridge exploded and the boy fell to the floor dead, the bullet having gone upward through the brain.

XI. Example of the use that is sometimes made of an apt quotation to precede a feature story. From the Kansas City *Star:*

Matilda wash the dishes; Lucinda fetch the broom;
And Sookey set the chairs nice all around the room.
— Old Song

HUTCHINSON, KAN., Nov. 18.— Because Stubbs won in Kansas, Ernest Switzer, an employé of the Bell Telephone Company, must play the part of an unwilling Cinderella while the hired girl spends the evening taking in the canned drama at the motion picture shows.

XII. Where the time is the feature of the story:

An hour before the funeral of his father was held yesterday, William Brown, 30 years old, was called from his

home, 113 Z street, and arrested. The arrest was made at the request of the police of Chicago, etc.

XIII. Where the place is the feature of the story:

GUTHRIE, OK., Nov. 17.— In rooms numbered 62, 47 and 32 at the Royal Hotel there is sweeping and dusting to-night. Governor Haskell has notified the landlord of the hotel that he will return to Guthrie early Saturday morning to resume his official residence, which he abandoned the night of June 11 to go to Oklahoma City.

XIV. Showing how the same story was epitomized by two different writers:

1. From the Chicago *Record-Herald:*

DENVER, Nov. 17.— Ralph Johnstone, the Wright brothers' most daring aviator and the holder of the world's record for altitude flights, fell 500 feet at Overland Park to-day, and broke every bone in his body. In attempting a "spiral glide" to the earth he forgot for a moment that the atmosphere here has not the carrying power of that to which he was accustomed, and death was his penalty.

Many thousands of spectators were on the field when Johnstone fell, but only a few hundred of them actually saw the accident, for the attention of the great crowd was centered upon Johnstone's partner, Hoxsey, then in air.

2. From the Kansas City *Star:*

DENVER, Nov. 17.— With one wing tip of his machine bent and broken, Ralph Johnstone, the aviator who held the world's altitude record, fell from a height of five hundred feet into the inclosure at Overland Park aviation field late this afternoon and was killed. When the spec-

tators crowded about the inclosure reached him, his body lay beneath the engine of the biplane with the white planes that had failed him wrapped about it like a shroud. Nearly every bone in his body was broken.

XV. The following leads illustrate various faults. Criticize from the point of view of style and rewrite:

1. Alleging a systematic police third degree by means of which she insists special officers of the Blank Street District have persecuted her 19-year-old son, John, Mrs. Mary Smith of 1910 C street appeared before Judge William Brown in chambers, Friday noon, and succeeded in laying before the judge evidence of such a character that the court held in abeyance its revocation of the young man's parole. If the contention of the mother proves correct, Chief of Police Jones will likely take a hand and the Board of Police Commissioners may be given the matter.

2. The three-story brick building at 140–158 D avenue was completely destroyed by fire early to-day, the blaze being extinguished only after three alarms had been sounded. The damage is estimated at $50,000. The building was occupied by the Blank Bag Company and was situated in the center of a factory section. The three hundred employés, men and women, are thrown out of work.

3. At the meeting of the Blank Improvement Association at Smith Hall, Broadway and Wilson street, yesterday afternoon, a fight was proposed against the City Railways Company and a complaint will probably be filed in Police Court in a few days if the Eighth street car line is not extended to the city limits. They also want more cars during the rush hours over the present line. Wil-

liam Howard, manager of the City Railways, has refused to put on more cars to accommodate the traffic, it is said.

CHAPTER VII

THE STORY PROPER

There are numbers of people whose ideal paper is one in which the editorials shall be written by an Addison, a Lamb, or a Swift; the art criticism by a Ruskin; while the financial editor shall be an Adam Smith. It is a fairly safe guess that a newspaper with such a staff would have a life about as long as the ministry of all the talents. Imagine Mrs. Battle's views on whist . . . written in an hour at midnight. Good writing really consists of clearness of expression mingled with true literary form. And these are qualities not unobtainable even in a daily paper, as Mr. Strachey (editor of the London Spectator) himself admitted.— From an editorial in the *Christian Science Monitor,* Boston.

I have always cared much for style and have endeavored to improve my own by reading a great deal of the best English and French prose. In writing, as in music, much of the perfection of style is a question of ear, but much also depends on the ideal the writer sets before himself. He ought, I think, to aim at the greatest possible simplicity and accuracy of expression, at vividness and force, at condensation. The last two heads will usually be found to blend; for condensation, when it is not attained at the sacrifice of clearness, is the great secret of force. I should say, from my own experience, that most improvements of style are of the nature either of condensation or of increased accuracy and delicacy of distinction.— From the Memoirs of W. E. H. Lecky.

Most news stories, as already pointed out, work backward from effect to cause. In the story of a

fire, for example, the writer first sets forth the most important results of the fire. If there were no features of obvious news interest, such as the loss of life or heavy property loss, he may cast about for picturesque details that will enable him to give a novel turn to his story. In either event he begins with the effect. The lead written, containing perhaps a suggestion of the cause, he proceeds to tell the story in detail. Usually the facts are put down in the order of their importance, unessential details being reserved for the last paragraph.

This method may be departed from, of course, if the most striking fact about the fire was not the result but the manner of its starting. If the fire, in itself unimportant, was one of a series started by an incendiary, the feature of the story manifestly is found in the cause and not in the effect. The lead in that case would be built on the cause, which is the reason for printing the story.

COMPRESSION AND EXPANSION

In any case the story begins with the main fact and moves toward the contributory incidents. Keeping his lead in mind, to avoid needless repetition, the writer expands his story to the required length by the addition of details. What he shall

tell is determined partly by his judgment of news values and partly by the space limit the editor has set. Told to write half a column, he is expected to fill that space and no more. The correspondent who wires, in reply to an order for 300 words, that he can't tell his story in less than 1,000, is certain to call down the wrath of the telegraph editor. The city reporter who cannot or will not compress his story into the space allotted him is not likely to remain long on the payroll. No matter what your personal opinion of the news value of your story, remember that the editor is the judge.

Another phase of "writing to space" presents itself, and this has more to do with the gathering than with the writing of news. The writer needs the ability to compress his story; he needs, too, to learn the art of expansion. The order to write half a column may find him unprepared if he has failed, as a news gatherer, to collect sufficient details to fill that space. The problem now is not one of cutting down the facts, but of telling all the facts he can muster. Ordered to write a certain number of words, the reporter is assumed to have the necessary information about his story. He is expected to tell the story without padding and without faking.

It may be said here incidentally, since the subject is one of perennial discussion outside of newspaper offices, that faking is not tolerated by any reputable newspaper. A reporter who manufactures news may succeed in deceiving his office a few times, but eventually he will be found out and dismissed. Harmless exaggeration in giving a story local color is often permitted, but no self-respecting city editor will publish a story that a reporter tells him is untrue. There remains but one solution to the problem of expansion and that is to get more facts. The reporter should bear this in mind in covering his story. To be on the safe side, he should get all the details possible in the time available. Then, when he returns to his office, he will be prepared if the city editor calls for a longer story than he had expected to write.

Even though the reporter is ordered to write only a few lines, the labor spent in covering a story thoroughly is not wasted. Having a complete knowledge of his subject, he is better able to determine what are the main facts and to present them in right proportion. Incomplete investigation leaves a reporter with the fear that he may have overlooked something essential which a rival news gatherer has found. The good reporter — and he is the one who

is most likely to be a good news writer — spares no effort in running down every smallest clew that may help him to understand his story. Persistent investigation, even when the story on the surface appears commonplace, may uncover an important feature and enable the reporter to score a notable beat for his paper.

What the newspaper demands is that the writer shall tell his story so that every sentence adds something new to it. The order to expand a story, viewed in this light, does not contradict what has been said of the need of brevity. In adding to your story to bring it to the prescribed length, avoid senseless repetition of details. Don't repeat an idea in different words simply to fill space. Try to make every sentence count. Bear in mind what you have told in the lead and strive to set forth the details in relation to the main facts. If your lead is built on the rescue of a woman by firemen, tell the details so they will contribute to the effect of the opening statement; don't switch your attention to the man who turned in the alarm and forget the rescue. The turning in of the alarm is probably a trivial detail and, if mentioned at all, should not be allowed to clog the movement of the story. "Don't worry about who called the ambulance or who

turned in the alarm " is one of the rules in the New York *Herald's* pamphlet of instructions to reporters.

THE MECHANICS OF THE STORY

The ideal news story, from the standpoint of mechanics, can be cut off at almost any paragraph and yet remain self-explanatory. This is the direct result of telling the facts in the order of their importance and making the story explain itself as it proceeds. The story that fails materially in this respect receives scant courtesy from the city editor. If passed on to the composing room without revision, it might cause trouble in the make-up of the paper should the necessity arise of cutting it down to make room for later and more important news. Properly written, the story can be shortened by taking off paragraphs from the bottom up. Thus the method of writing the body of the story is suited to the mechanical limitations of the paper.

To understand this fully some knowledge of the manner of making up the paper is necessary. One unacquainted with newspaper work may wonder idly now and then how the editors manage each day to get just enough news matter to make the paper " come out even." The reporter learns quickly that a vast deal that is written for the paper never gets

into print. Much is cut out of the copy; what survives and is set into type is often still further subjected to pruning. It is the business of the make-up editor, who watches the type set into the forms in the composing room, to see that the big stories are displayed according to schedule in the most prominent positions in the paper, with the minor news tapering off. On Page 1 he puts the cream of the day's news — the stories that seem most likely to attract the reader — on the same principle that the merchant puts his most attractive wares in his show window. Suppose now that late news is received that makes it necessary to cut down something in type. It is only a few minutes before press time; there is not time to shorten a story by rewriting it. If the story he decides to cut has been constructed strictly according to rule, the editor has only to take off enough from the end to make the space he requires. In actual practice, however, he may be compelled to use considerable ingenuity in making his cuts, taking out a paragraph here, a line there, and possibly writing a new line to hold the remaining parts of the story together in logical sequence.

Resetting of type, a source of delay and expense, is avoided whenever possible. For this reason care

should be taken in marking proofs, especially late proofs, not to make unnecessary changes that would require the resetting of several lines. If a word is to be taken out, try to substitute matter to fill the space so that only one new line will need to be set.

It is not necessary that the reporter know the mechanical side of newspaper making in order to write a good story, but a general knowledge of this phase of the work is desirable. It has been truly said that every scrap of information the reporter possesses may at some time be turned to account. This is true also of information regarding the workings of the newspaper, in his own and other departments. Knowing how stories are pruned down in the composing room, he will be less inclined to bury the main facts of his story in the last paragraph.

While the same general principles of news writing apply to all newspapers, the need of making the story explain itself as it proceeds is more pronounced on the evening than on the morning newspaper. The morning paper seldom prints more than three editions and hence there is less occasion for "making over" than on the evening paper with its half dozen or more editions. The story that occupies a column in the first edition of the evening paper may be reduced to a paragraph before the end

of the day. Then, too, the greater speed with which the evening paper is turned out makes it imperative that a story be so written that it can be changed with the least possible delay.

Do not get the idea from the foregoing that your story should be a dry-as-dust recital of bare facts. Try to weave your facts together into a coherent story that will hold the reader's attention at every point. The best news story moves with a swing that carries the reader swiftly and easily along from the lead to the conclusion, and leaves him at the end with a definite and clear idea of what he has read. From the standpoint of the reader there is added reason for making the story self-explanatory as it goes. If he does not care to read to the end, the story nevertheless should stand complete in his mind, as far as the essential facts are concerned, at whatever point he leaves off. The novelist's hint that something startling will be disclosed later has no place in the news story.

Certain of the general rules that govern all good writing are applicable in even greater degree to news writing. Be careful not to omit essential words. The omission of the word "not," for example, may reverse the meaning of an entire sentence. The same is true of an omitted or a misplaced comma.

Observe the standard rules of punctuation, with any special rules that may be in force on your paper. Use pronouns guardedly; it is better to repeat a name than run the risk of ambiguity. For the same reason the words "former" and "latter" are frowned upon by many newspapers. Although needless repetition of ideas should be avoided, don't be afraid to repeat a word if that is the simplest, most direct way of conveying your thought. A dog is a dog; it is absurd to call it a "canine" (and "canine," by the way, should be used only as an adjective), simply to avoid repeating the word.

Put life and vigor into your story. An apt metaphor may express an idea vividly and at the same time save many words. What has been said of the advisability of short, telling sentences in the lead applies also to the body of the story. It is a good general rule to avoid sentences that would fill more than seven lines of type.

In trying to give your story freshness and originality do not go to the extreme of flippancy, especially in writing of a serious subject. Flippancy is not cleverness, though it often passes for such in the writer's own estimation. You will not err in this direction if you make your story fair. Dialect should be used sparingly, if at all, and

it should never be used when there is a chance that it will offend a large group of readers.

Remember the injunction to keep yourself out of the story. The experiences of a reporter in getting a story are seldom of any interest outside of the circle of his fellow workers. Let the story speak for itself. Now and then an occasion may arise that would justify the reporter in recounting his adventures, but in any such event he should first consult the city editor.

Unless you are pressed for time, read over your story before you hand it to the city editor and make sure that you have let no errors creep in. Read it, too, after it appears in print and note what changes, if any, have been made. Everyone makes mistakes — but the news writer can't afford to make the same mistake twice.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOME OR CLASS-ROOM STUDY

I. The following account of a disastrous fire illustrates the standard newspaper method of handling a big story. Observe that the climax — the death of twenty-five girls in a fire-trap — comes first. That is the vital fact, beside which all other features are of minor importance. The paragraphs are numbered for reference:

1. NEWARK, N. J., Nov. 26.— Twenty-five girls were burned alive or crushed to death on the pavement in ten minutes this morning in leaping from the windows and fire escapes of the four-story brick factory occupied by paper-box companies at 216 High street, corner of Orange. The fire caught from a blaze which started in some gasoline used in cleaning an electric lamp.

2. Nearly all the victims were young women employés. The latest count to-night showed that sixteen bodies recovered have been identified and that six girls are still missing. They may be among the unidentified dead or they may be in the ruins. The collapse of a wall late to-night interrupted further search. Forty-nine were taken to hospitals, and two of them may die.

(List of the dead and fatally injured follows, this account having been published in a newspaper in a nearby city.)

3. Among the injured is Joseph E. Sloane, deputy fire chief, who was overtaken by the falling wall and buried in bricks and rubbish. He is badly hurt, but may recover.

4. The ambulance from the City Hospital and the patrol wagons from all the precincts were dispatched to the scene. An immense crowd kept the police busy.

5. One of the spectators said that at least fifteen girls had jumped from the fourth floor of the burning structure. With the exception of two girls employed by the Ætna company, all the employés on the first and second floors of the building escaped, either by means of the exits or the one fire escape. The two girls suffered burns about the head and face.

6. Twenty of the injured were taken to St. Michael's Hospital in the ambulance. The salvage automobile took four more. Of these two died after reaching the hospital.

7. Life nets were put into use immediately after the arrival of the firemen. Perhaps thirty lives were saved in this way. One girl, Hattie Delapey, was badly hurt by striking the edge of the net and falling to the pavement. Another girl suffered a broken ankle. Eugene McHugh, a foreman in the employ of the Ætna company, guided several scores of girls in his employ to safety down a fire escape. Nearly all escaped injury.

8. Less than twenty minutes after the arrival of the firemen the interior of the building was flame-swept. The floors of the upper part of the building fell shortly afterward. It is believed that a search of the building will reveal other bodies.

9. Among those who were early at the scene was the Reverend E. F. Quirk, assistant rector of St. Joseph's Church. He gave last rites of the church to seven of the victims. Mr. Quirk said he counted twenty-three prostrate forms on the sidewalk. All were young women who had leaped from the upper windows of the factory.

10. The rush of the flames was so swift and threw such unreasoning terror into the huddled working girls on the top story, that the body of one was found still seated on a charred stool beside the machine at which she had been busy when the first cry of "Fire!" petrified her with fright.

11. Horrible as must have been what went on in the smoke of that crowded upper room, what befell outside in the bright sunlight was yet more horrible. The building was furiously inflammable and the first gush of flames had cut off all possibility of escape by the stairways. The elevator made one trip, but took down no passengers and never came back.

12. The only exit was by two narrow fire escapes, the lower platforms of which were twenty-five feet from the street. On to these overcrowded and steep lanes, scorched

dancing hot by the jets from lower windows, pressed forward a mob of women, blind with panic, driven by the fire and the others behind them.

13. A net had been spread beneath the windows, and the girls began to jump. "Like rats out of a burning bin," was the way a fireman described that pell-mell descent. Some of them were dashed off the fire escape to the pavement sixty feet below. Others stood in the windows outlined against the flames and jumped clear; others from the landings; still others from the steps where they stood. The air was full of them and they fell everywhere — into the net, on the firemen, and fifteen of them on the stone slabs.

14. When the awful rain of human bodies ceased there were eight dead in the street. Seven more were so badly crushed that they died in hospitals. Fifty are still under surgeons' care.

15. Clouds of smoke and showers of burning embers spread over the city. (Further details follow. The foregoing, with the headlines, fills one column.)

(A laboratory guide to the analysis of the story: Paragraph 1.— Note that the essential points are summarized in the opening sentence. There is no attempt to describe the "lurid flames," no philosophizing, but a plain, terse account of what happened — the result of the fire. A brief statement of the cause follows. Often a story of this kind begins coming into the office just before an edition goes to press. If the story is constructed on the right plan, the lead can be sent to the composing

room as a complete story for that edition, while the rest is put into type to be added in succeeding editions.

Paragraph 2.— Further details concerning the loss of life. Observe how the elements of greatest interest, those relating to persons, not things, are kept uppermost. Temporarily the fire itself is ignored; what the reader wants to know about is the effect of the fire on its victims. So, too, the destruction of the factory, under ordinary conditions worthy of being "played up" in the lead because of the heavy property loss, is passed over as of minor consequence. Detailed information about the victims is properly given early in the story, to answer the questions that first come into the minds of their families and friends.

Paragraph 3.— Here the name of the deputy fire chief, who was hurt while on duty, is singled out for special mention.

Paragraph 4.— Detailed story of the fire begins. The facts here told indicate the magnitude of the disaster.

Paragraphs 5 and 6.— Further human-interest details.

Paragraphs 7 and 8.— Note the short sentences. The story moves swiftly from fact to fact. The

writer is telling what happened, without commenting on it.

Paragraph 9.— Human-interest feature deemed worthy of a prominent place in the story.

Paragraph 10.— Effective description of the quick spread of the fire by means of incident. At this point the "fine writer" might have lugged in his artillery of adjectives. Note the opposite method — the right news method — of telling specific details.

Paragraph 11.— Continuation of the same method. "The elevator made one trip, but took down no passengers and never came back," is finely descriptive.

Paragraphs 12 and 13.— Swift, vivid description by specific details. The precision with which the story is told, indicating accurate observation, is noteworthy, as in "twenty-five feet from the street," "sixty feet below," "fifteen of them on the stone slabs." The exact figures are obviously far more effective than a vague expression such as "a number of."

Paragraph 14.— Detailed summary. Note that every sentence adds something to the story. There is no padding.

Paragraph 15.— The story continues a column

from this point, fact piled on fact in the order of importance. A story written in this manner has been likened to a pyramid. It may be cut from the bottom up at almost any point and yet stand complete.)

II. Another kind of fire story, from the New York *World,* in which the news value is not so obvious as in the foregoing. Here the writer has seized upon the human-interest feature and developed his story accordingly. The fire in itself was of no importance:

Fire visited last night the lodging house conducted by Mrs. Hannah Tracy, 102 years old, and Mrs. Sarah Wrinn, ninety-five years old, at No. 803 Washington street, and now the two aged landladies, who never demanded board money in advance, are in Bellevue and their boarders are minus their care.

Children playing in front of the old-fashioned brick house near the Gansevoort Market saw smoke coming from the basement, where the two women had their living quarters. Little Arthur Weldon of No. 826 Washington street ran to a fire box and gleefully sent in a call. Margaret Havlick and Elizabeth Irving, also of No. 826, skipped across to the store of Joseph White with the news.

White ran to No. 803, broke in the basement door and found that a cat that looked to be at least one hundred years old had upset an oil lamp on a table and that the table cover was burning. He threw the cover to the floor and stamped out the flames. Then he sprang into a rear room and found Mrs. Tracy in bed, feebly calling for help,

while Mrs. Wrinn lay on the floor. He carried them out, one at a time.

Though they had not inhaled much smoke their advanced ages led an ambulance surgeon from St. Vincent's Hospital to take them to Bellevue. Neighbors said the women were sisters. Mrs. Tracy's husband kept a dry goods store in Christopher street fifty years ago and when he died left her a little money.

Mrs. Tracy is known in the neighborhood as "Mother" Tracy. Children have made it a point to follow her in the street, for she often distributed cents from her little old-fashioned reticule.

(An exception that proves a rule already stated is found in the second paragraph, which tells how a child turned in the fire alarm. An effective touch of local color is added in the last paragraph. The story is a good example of restraint in writing. No undue effort is made to impress the reader with the underlying pathos, but the facts, simply and concisely told, are allowed to speak for themselves. The headlines on the published story were: "Sisters, 102 and 95, Put in Peril by Cat — Children in Street Give Alarm After Animal Knocks Over Lamp and Starts Fire.")

III. Write a story of 300 to 350 words from the following notes. Do not manufacture any details, but put those here given into the form of a readable news story:

Fire in brick tenement, 193 Adams street, 10 o'clock last night. Damage $2,000, estimated by Assistant Fire Chief Dunn. Cause was the explosion of lamp on second floor. All the tenants got out safely except Charles Lawrence, 35, a painter, who lived with his wife and three children on the top, fifth, floor. He was asleep in bed when his wife called out that the house was on fire and told him to get out quick. He got out of bed and told her to go along with the kids; said he would come as soon as he got his clothes on. She went with the children and on the stairway met Patrolmen Quinn and Brown. Told them her husband had delayed to dress. The building was filling with smoke and they turned their attention to rescuing those on the lower floors. When the firemen heard that Lawrence was still in the house, they went to his room and found him lying face downward on the floor, unconscious. He had inhaled smoke. He died in an ambulance on the way to the City Hospital. The fire was extinguished in forty-five minutes.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FEATURE STORY

Richard Whiteing, the English novelist, is a strong believer that the art of literature has no greater aid than daily journalism. Speaking once he said:

"Some foolish people have said that daily journalism is killing literature in its highest forms. I say, to the contrary, that the daily paper provides a sort of first course in literature, and I am an immense admirer of the clear, incisive style adopted by the halfpenny press.

"It stimulates curiosity, and when once you have done that in any human being you have started him on the right road. The one deadly thing is apathy. The cow in the field has no note of interrogation. The savage might see an aëroplane and not wonder.

"You can lead a man from the curbstone to the stars when you have once made him curious. A newspaper forces a man to be curious.

"The dear old truth — that's all we want. The truth is so beautiful, so amazingly interesting, so much more wonderful than fiction. Therefore I say that, quite apart from morality, it is policy for a paper to tell the truth."— *The Fourth Estate.*

The feature story, as the name indicates, has more to do with the development of some interesting feature suggested by the day's news than with the strict presentation of news for its own sake. It is therefore not subject to the same rules

that govern the writing of the news story. Indeed it can hardly be said that the feature story is subject to any rules, except those that apply to composition in general. Individuality in style counts for more in the feature story than in the news story that has no other purpose than to inform. Greater freedom is allowed the writer; he is not required, for one thing, to summarize his story in the lead. On the contrary, he may employ the fictional method of working up to a climax. The main end of all feature writing is to make the story interesting. If the writer succeeds in this, it does not much matter on what plan his story is constructed.

WHAT THE FEATURE STORY IS NOT

What the feature story is can be indicated by showing what it is not. In the first place, it is not a skeletonized recital of bare facts. This was amusingly brought out by the New York *Sun* in reply to the statement of a college professor that the journalism of the future would be "wholly without decorative effects." The *Sun* gave half a dozen examples of what might be expected from a journalism of that type. Here is the *Sun's* "Report of a Suicide":

The body of a young woman was removed from the river at the foot of 309th street by the harbor police yesterday afternoon.

Pinned to her dress was a note stating that she purposed committing suicide, signed Edith G. Wannaquit.

The young woman was about twenty-six years of age. She was not at all beautiful. She was, in fact, noticeably plain of feature.

Her fingers were not covered with magnificent diamonds. She wore no rings at all. Her clothing was of the most inexpensive material.

There is no mystery whatever connected with the case, nor have the police authorities the slightest idea that she was the victim of foul play.

It is deemed positive from her appearance that she did not belong to some distinguished family of this community. The young woman simply had become tired of living and she jumped into the river — that is all. The case is wholly lacking in any element or feature of a sensational character. The names of the Wannaquit family appear in the city directory but no inquiries were made of any members of the family, the case not being deemed of sufficient importance.

It must not be inferred that the feature story, or any other kind of news story, should distort the facts. The writer in the *Sun* has merely attempted to reduce to the absurd the theory that journalism should put aside attractiveness in writing for a bare summary of facts. The modern newspaper, while its main purpose is still to inform, is coming more and more to be a source of

writer must have seen and understood his story before he can tell it in a way to impress the reader with its truth. Much depends on the manner of the telling. A pathetic story loses its power if it descends to pathos; a humorous story must be something more than mere flippancy. There is special need that the writer choose his words carefully. Perhaps the best prescription for all kinds of human-interest stories, especially those designed to arouse the reader's sympathy, is to write simply and naturally. False emotion is easily detected. Here again the writer should remember that the short, Anglo-Saxon words are the most effective. Ninety-seven per cent. of the words in the Bible are from the Anglo-Saxon. Numerous instances might be cited of human-interest stories that have moved newspaper readers to contribute generously toward the alleviation of suffering. Such stories are not editorials. The writer does not say: This is a pathetic story. He simply tells the facts, and if the story is truly pathetic nothing in the way of "fine writing" is needed or desirable.

THE EDITOR'S PROBLEM

The city editor is often called upon to determine whether a happening shall be treated only as

news or shall be expanded into a feature, or human-interest, story. The story of an aged miser's death, for example, may be worth only a paragraph if written for its immediate news value alone. But underlying the surface facts there may be a story of intense human interest — the man's life story. The field of investigation that opens before the news gatherer is fraught with possibilities. It is for him to clothe the skeleton of the story with the flesh and blood of reality. What of the man's early life? Why his passion for hoarding money? What deprivations did he undergo to gratify that passion? These and other questions come trooping to the mind of the reporter in his quest of the story. The mere fact of the miser's death becomes incidental — it is the "peg," as the city editor says, on which the story hangs. What the reporter finds becomes the basis of a human-interest story. A paragraph stating simply that an old man known to his neighbors as a miser had died would mean little to the vast majority of readers, but the story of the man's life, properly told, has the perennial interest of human tragedy.

Willingness to dig for facts goes a long way toward success in reporting.

SUNDAY MAGAZINE STORIES

The magazine section of the big Sunday newspaper is made up almost altogether of feature stories. Usually the two outer pages of the section are in colors, and for these pages stories are demanded that lend themselves readily to vivid color treatment. A story unimportant in itself may be spread over an entire page if it is adaptable to a big, colorful illustration. Such would be a story of a new and odd style of quadrille or round dancing or a speculative story about the possibilities of airships. The story itself is subordinated to the pictures. Soberer color pages may be made of the pictures of public buildings, of a city's skyline and the like, with a short explanatory story.

The inside features of the Sunday magazine are seldom written in the style of the news story. The news element merely furnishes the suggestion, and with that as a basis the writer handles the story in its universal application. For instance, a news item telling of the death of a motor car driver in a race may suggest a page story about all the drivers who have met death in a similar manner. Past events as a rule are dealt with only as they affect present or future conditions. Thus a news story

about a rich man's death may later be expanded into a page article about the effect of his fortune on the living. The story of a queer will may be the "peg" for a page of speculation about wills in general, with all sorts of other queer wills mentioned.

The magazine section is made ready two or three weeks in advance of the date of publication. This fact must be kept in mind by the writer to avoid inconsistency.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOME OR CLASS-ROOM STUDY

I. A feature story dependent for its value on an original method of treatment. From the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch:*

There was material for a good moving picture film in the adventure of Alec Jones, a Cape Girardeau visitor, at Union Station Wednesday night. Jones left in such a hurry that he failed to copyright the lively scenario he created, and anybody who wants it can have it without royalties.

This is about the way it will be described when it gets into the film journals:

JONES AND HIS GRIP.—Jones, from Southeast Missouri, is waiting in Union Station to take a train which leaves in an hour. Every time the train caller makes an announcement, Jones thinks his train is about to leave, and rushes for the door. Just before the first call

comes, he is sitting beside a middle-aged woman on one of the round seats surrounding a pillar. She thinks he is sitting too near her and moves with some show of indignation to the other side of the pillar.

She neglects to move her big carpet bag, and in his excitement at the train call, Jones takes the carpet bag instead of his own satchel. He rushes up to the train caller to ask about his train, and that official motions him back to his seat. He sits down beside an old man. In the meantime the middle-aged woman misses her carpet bag, and, finding the satchel in its place, opens it and is horrified to behold a pair of wool socks, a flask and other masculine belongings. She rushes around the waiting room hunting her carpet bag, and reaches Jones just as he is aroused by another train call.

This time he leaves her carpet bag and picks up the heavy suit case belonging to the old man beside him. Again Jones finds out that his train is not ready, and retires to another seat, where a carpenter is dozing with his kit of tools beside him. Just as the old man, seeking his suit case and guided by the woman, reaches him, Jones jumps up again and carries off the carpenter's kit, leaving the old man's suit case in its place. The carpenter, the old man and the woman follow him and a policeman straightens matters out.

Sergeant Meehan of the Union Station police squad says it all happened.

(Note the informality of the introduction. The story aims to amuse the reader — nothing more.

It is a rule of most newspapers that no story shall end with indented matter: hence the last paragraph. The headlines are in keeping with the spirit of the story: "What Happened to Jones? Well, Here's the Yarn — Being the Comedy of Alec From Cape Girardeau and His Various Valises.")

II. A feature story in subject matter and treatment. From the Kansas City *Star:*

"Eyes made while you wait" is not the sign on the door, but it might be, for that is the way they do it. Artificial eyes are being made to order in Independence, and it takes only about a half-hour to send a customer out with a "made eye" that scarcely can be distinguished from his natural one.

The laboratory is in a little room on the third floor of the Metropolitan Hotel.

The work is being done in Independence because manufactured gas is available for fuel there. Natural gas is not rich enough, and will not stand the heavy pressure that is necessary in making artificial eyes. From a connection with the city gas pipes, Mr. Kohler passes the gas through a little blowpipe equipped with an apparatus for producing extreme heat.

"Thousands of artificial eyes are kept in stock," said Mr. Merry, "but there is an advantage in making the eye to order. The slightest peculiarity in size, shape or color in the natural eye can be reproduced exactly, in the artificial one."

The foundation of the process of manufacture is a glass tube about three-fourths of an inch in diameter. The

tubes vary slightly in color and in quality. Under the blowpipe a small portion of a tube is melted off and shaped into an eye. The color is put in by very delicate processes, and even any abnormal peculiarity of the natural eye is reproduced.

A young man was "sitting for an eye" this morning when a visitor called. Kohler, glancing alternately from the natural eye of the customer to the blowpipe and back again, quickly modeled an eye to fill that particular need.

"In many cases they have more than one eye made while they are at it," said Mr. Merry. "Unless handled very carefully, the eyes are easily broken, either by falling or from sudden changes of temperature. Some persons are so careless with their glass eyes — they roll them around as though they were marbles. We had one customer in Kansas City who had twenty-four eyes made a year ago, and who already has broken five of them. But that is not the fault of the maker of the eyes."

(Enough of the story is given here to indicate the method. Tell one thing that has been omitted. Note the absence of technical terms. The writer tells the things about the making of glass eyes that interested him and hence are most likely to interest the general reader. A technical description of the process would fall flat as a newspaper story. The lead — "eyes made while you wait" — piques the reader's curiosity.)

III. A human-interest story told simply and in good taste. From the New York *World:*

Flowers, the smiles of his fiancée and the commendation of his superiors went with Patrolman George A. Pattison when he limped out of New York Hospital last night on crutches and with one leg gone.

Just two weeks ago Pattison lay on the sidewalk at Forty-second street and Fifth avenue, one leg badly crushed by a surface car, and smiled up at Deputy Commissioner Driscoll when that man patted his shoulder and said, "Too bad!"

"It's all right, Commissioner," said Pattison. "We must expect such things in our business."

When they heard he was to leave the hospital yesterday his comrades in the West Thirtieth Station determined he should see there were other things in "our business" and that "our business" wasn't entirely the suppression of emotion.

So last night the men of the Tenderloin Station made up a purse. Some of it was set aside to pay for a taxicab for the long trip from the hospital to the policeman's home in New Brighton, Staten Island, and the rest went to Broadway florists. Inspector George McClusky and Captain Samuel McElroy rode in the flower-filled cab to the hospital. There they were met by Miss Mary Lynch, who will be married to the policeman as soon as he is fully recovered.

She led them to Pattison and they told him everybody in the department knew he was a man and that Miss Lynch would never regret her marriage to him. And he needn't worry about his future, for his pay would be the same, though he would be a clerk at Headquarters when he was able to go to work again.

There were tears in Pattison's eyes as he tried to thank everybody for the good feeling displayed. Then he was helped down the stairs. When he found the taxicab was

almost filled with flowers he didn't trust himself to speak, but wrung the hands of his friends.

Then, with his fiancée among the flowers, he started for his mother's home, while inspector and captain waved their caps.

IV. Write a feature story of not more than 1,000 words, on any topic that you believe people would like to read about. The following are given as suggestive of the possibilities of a small town: The oldest house in town; how the streets were named; an interview with the railroad station agent on the people he meets; if a college town, a story of the students who earn their own expenses; organized charities — get the human side; hunters' licenses — number — revenue from — women hunters, if any — possibly talks with some of the hunters; birth rate for a given period compared with the death rate; marriage licenses — minors who have been married — the favorite month for weddings; collections of antiquities; recent improvements, such as street paving; condition of the city jail; the oldest man; the oldest woman; persons in town above the age of 90; women's clubs; the public schools — how the attendance compares with that of previous years — talks with the superintendent and teachers on their

work and plans; former citizens who have become famous; the moving picture shows — how many attend daily — talks with the show managers about the growth of the moving picture business; any unusual industry, such as the making of corn-cob pipes; number of automobiles in town — condition of the country roads — farmers who own automobiles; the public library — what books are most read — effect of the seasons on the number and character of the books read; the post office — amount of stamp sales — odd addresses on letters — hardships of rural route carriers. The list might be extended indefinitely.

CHAPTER IX

THE INTERVIEW

They (teaching and accompanying reading) can suggest the proper relation between subject and style — the man whose style is too big or too small for his subject is the born prey of the parodist; they can call attention to the balance proper to be observed between narrative and dialogue, and show by reference to the masters (to Sterne and Congreve, for example), how vividness and dramatic suspense may be imparted to dialogue without loss of naturalness; they may incite the hearer to learn from Steele that writing may be very simple yet very distinguished, from Stevenson that subtlety is one thing and obscurity quite another. The professor can, and should, preach with parrot-like persistency, "Lucidity — lucidity — lucidity!" — Said by Anthony Hope on the writing of novels, but applicable also to the news story; from the *University Magazine*, Toronto.

An interview in the newspaper sense, the dictionary says, is "a conversation held for the purpose of obtaining the opinions of a person for publication." The term may be applied both to the process of questioning by a reporter to elicit information, and to the published statement. An interview may be informal or formal — that is, it may be incidental to the end of making a story complete or it may be the end in itself.

WHEN THE INTERVIEW IS INCIDENTAL

The city editor's fourth dimension would make it possible for him to have a reporter present at every happening which the newspaper chronicles. Every story would thus be obtained at first hand. Such a condition being manifestly impossible, the reporter usually is compelled to rely on the information furnished him by others.

Sometimes, of course, a reporter's assignment is such that he can see the story unfolding before him, as at a fire or a court trial, and he is enabled to write more vividly than if his facts had come to him second-hand. Every reporter dreams of the day when he will have the chance to write a big story that he has seen in the making. It is related that a group of New York newspaper men were discussing the biggest possible story that could "break." The ideas of all were summed up by the oldest of the group: "Suppose Brooklyn Bridge, at the height of the evening rush homeward, should fall, and I should be there, just at the edge, the only reporter who saw it — that would be the biggest story that could happen!"

On most of his assignments the reporter must trust to others for many, if not all, of his facts.

Covering the story of an automobile accident, for example, he must see the story through the eyes of those who were present. These persons he interviews informally. From the information obtained in this way, supplemented by his own observation of the visible results of the accident, the reporter culls the salient facts and writes the story in his own words. What he is sure of he makes his own; other facts he may put in the form of indirect quotation, while occasionally he may quote a person directly.

Interviewing in its broad sense is thus at the basis of nearly all newspaper reporting, because nearly all stories deal with persons — their doings and opinions. Even in covering the story which the reporter is fortunate enough to observe, a certain amount of interviewing may still be necessary to make the story complete. If it is a fire story, he probably questions the owner about the loss and the insurance and plans for rebuilding; he interviews various persons to find out the cause of the fire; he talks, perhaps, to persons who have been rescued and their rescuers. These and other facts can be obtained only by asking questions.

Except when a story is dependent on what a person has said, in a speech or a formal interview,

it is nearly always desirable that the reporter, as far as possible, should make the story his own. He should hitch his wagon to the star of absolute certainty and then tell the story, at least the salient facts, in his own words. It is poor policy in news writing, as a rule, to put trivial bits of information in the form of direct quotation. The reporter will find that owing to the common failure to observe accurately the accounts given by witnesses of a given occurrence will vary widely. It is the reporter's business to learn all that he can of the story; to see, in the limited time at his command, as many as possible of the persons concerned in it, and then to present to the reader an intelligible, lucid account in the third person — the kernel of the story without the husks of inconsistency. It is impossible to do this if the writer slavishly quotes, in the direct form, everybody to whom he talked in getting the story.

Some reporters are inclined to overwork the direct-quotation method because it is usually the easiest way of telling the story, often relieving the writer of the necessity of thinking for himself. Quotation marks may enclose a multitude of rhetorical sins. Rather than go to the trouble of coordinating his facts, such a writer will lazily string

together the statements of several persons and let it go at that. This plan is obviously bad. It violates the fundamental rules of news writing, which demand that a story be clear, concise and forceful, and gives the reader a confused image rather than the definite, clear-cut impression left by the story rightly told.

It is absurd to lug into a story the views of persons who have no vital connection with it, simply for the sake of filling space. And yet that is the error committed by some news writers, as in a fire story, for example, where the janitor is quoted as saying, "Yes, I saw the fire; it was a great sight," or something else equally trivial. When the janitor sees that he immediately gets an exaggerated idea of his own importance. It is conceivable that the next time a reporter asks him for a bit of information, the janitor will throw out his chest with the air of a personage and reply, "I refuse to make a statement for publication," hoping that the newspaper will quote him to that effect.

The news writer who is prodigal with his direct quotation is encouraging an attitude of mind that will cause trouble for him and other newspaper men in the future. If a person is asked to give information about a story and refuses, it is seldom

good policy to state that fact, unless he bears such a close relation to the story that his silence is of interest. If there is no particular reason why the opinion of Smith, the janitor, should be sought, don't commit the folly of telling several thousand readers — and Smith — that he "refused to talk for publication."

Another absurdity is illustrated in the sentence: "Smith refused to make a statement, but said . . . " This paradoxical introduction may be followed by a long interview with Smith. What the writer probably means is that Smith, when first asked for a statement, said that he wouldn't talk, but later changed his mind. The reader is not likely to be interested in all this, so the copy reader cuts it down to "Smith said."

WHEN THE INTERVIEW IS THE STORY

"The Governor will be in town to-night. Get a statement from him on the police situation here."

Thus the city editor outlines what he expects the reporter to bring back to the office. His order is the first step toward getting an interview on a definite subject. The reporter sees the Governor, questions him along the line indicated and returns to the office with his story.

Now what the Governor said is not incidental to another story; it is the story in itself and is so written. There are no definite, fixed rules as to how it shall be written, except that it shall fairly express the Governor's sentiment. The form in which the facts shall be presented depends on the news writer's own judgment or the editor's instructions. He may begin his story in any one of several ways. If the Governor said something of grave importance in a striking manner, the reporter may seize upon that for his lead, throwing it into the form of direct quotation. The story then might begin in this way:

"The police department of this city must clean house. There has been an alarming increase of crime here in the last six months, and I am going to find out the cause."

Governor Smith, who arrived in —— last night, thus outlined the purpose of his visit. The Governor, etc. (After this explanatory paragraph the quotation is continued.)

Or the lead might be in indirect quotation, somewhat after this manner:

Governor Smith declared, on his arrival in —— last night, that he had determined to learn the reason for the recent increase in crime in this city. He said the police department must "clean house."

"I am here to make a thorough investigation," the

Governor said. "If the charges of grafting are proved, I will proceed . . ."

If the interview yielded nothing of importance, the writer might base his story on the fact of the Governor's visit:

Governor Smith, with his secretary and three members of his staff, arrived in —— at 10 o'clock last night and went to the —— Hotel. The Governor is here to address the State Convention of Millers this morning.

In an interview last night he said . . .

An interview may take the form of a feature story. Suppose the Governor has a hobby that is worth writing about. Then an interview with him might begin in this way:

Governor Smith is going to saw all his own wood this winter. He believes that bending over the sawbuck and cutting cord wood into stove lengths will put him into prime condition for "sawing wood" officially. (Interview follows.)

It must not be understood that the foregoing examples are set forms for interviews. They are given merely to suggest the several ways in which the writer can begin his story.

The interview may be in itself either a plain news story or a feature story. It may take the form of a considered statement or it may be informal in character. Some men give out type-

written statements of their views when asked for an interview, while others talk freely, putting the reporter on his honor to be fair and accurate in his quotation. The question of presenting the speaker's remarks most effectively from the news standpoint is then left entirely to the writer's discretion. He is not expected to quote slavishly. Indeed, few men would like to have their conversation appear in print verbatim, with the defects to which the best spoken language is liable. Unless the interview is printed for no other purpose than to poke fun at the speaker, as might be done with the remarks of an ignorant and disreputable politician, the writer should strive to convey the spirit of what is said rather than the exact words. Now and then a characteristic phrase or sentence may be quoted verbatim — and this is desirable in order to give a flavor of the speaker's individuality — but the faults of ordinary speech, verbosity, awkwardness and the like, should not be reproduced. True accuracy leaves a correct impression of the whole. An interview rightly written, telling the speaker's meaning in simple, clear English seasoned with phrases that give a hint of his personality, is more accurate in this sense than a phonographic record of the conversation.

It follows that the speaker's remarks need not be set down in the order in which they were made. Possibly the last thing he said may be put in the lead. Part of the interview may be in indirect quotation, summarizing statements of minor importance. The reporter may introduce explanatory sentences, especially if the interview is long and deals with more than one subject. He may break into the discourse to tell of the speaker's gesture at a certain point or to describe a facial expression — anything that will give the reader a vivid and true picture of the man interviewed.

Ordinarily the reporter's questions should not appear in the story, but sometimes they may be effectively given and the interview may consist of a series of categorical questions and answers, resembling the reports of testimony at a trial. This method may be used when the newspaper desires specific answers to certain pointed questions of great interest, or when it seems the most direct way of getting the meaning before the reader. No set rules can be laid down on this point; every interview, like every other news story, presents its own problem.

The suggestions regarding the interview of formal character apply also to the reporting of

speeches. It is the custom nowadays of many men who appear often in public to give out to the newspapers in advance typewritten copies of their speeches. The news writer sent to report an address, freed of the necessity of following closely the speaker's words, may devote his attention to the details of the meeting. In covering a formal lecture or address of which no advance copy is available the reporter naturally may use the speaker's exact words more freely than in writing the interview. Even in such a story, however, it is seldom desirable to give all the speech, and frequent summaries may be made in the writer's own words. This also is a matter for the reporter's judgment of news values. It is not demanded that the newspaper man be able to write shorthand. If a verbatim report of a speech is desired a stenographer is employed for that purpose.

A word as to the mechanics of the story: Be careful to enclose all quoted matter in quotation marks. Begin each paragraph with quotation marks and don't forget to use the marks at the end of the last paragraph. Remember that "he said" used too often in dialogue becomes monotonous. "Replied," "asserted," "laughed," "remarked," "exclaimed," "corrected," "inquired," "sug-

gested," "urged" and many other words may often be substituted to good advantage.

A series of interviews from different persons on the same topic is a symposium. In this form of story the name of the speaker is given, then the interview. The lead states briefly the topic under discussion.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOME OR CLASS-ROOM STUDY

I. Feature interview beginning with a striking remark in direct quotation. From the New York *World:*

"It is impossible for a woman to live in comfort in New York on $3,000 a year."

This is the statement of Mrs. Juanita La Bar, who has petitioned the Orphans' Court of Scranton, Pa., to allow her an additional thousand dollars so she can send her eleven-year-old son to school.

The things Mrs. La Bar thinks absolutely necessary for a modest menage are:

One servant.

To dress not handsomely but neatly.

A healthful apartment.

The best the market affords for the table.

A vacation to the seashore, country or mountains every summer.

"I can't get along on $3,000," said Mrs. La Bar to a reporter for the *World* last night at her apartment at No. 210 West Twenty-first street, "and I'm not extravagant, either, because I don't owe a cent."

The apartment was modest and comfortable, and Mrs. La Bar was dressed quietly, but in well cut and well made garments.

"Ten years ago, when my husband was alive, we lived well at a hotel and went to the seashore every year. We had a maid to look after the boy, but we didn't keep house . . ."

(The rest of the story consists of direct quotation.)

(The method of presenting the interview here is simple and effective — first a paragraph in direct quotation that contains the meat of the story, then identification of the speaker and a third-person statement of her views, and finally the interview itself, running about half a column.)

II. A more formal and conservative method is shown in the following:

NEW YORK, Dec. 2.— B. F. Yoakum, chairman of the board of directors of the St. Louis & San Francisco Railroad Company, arrived here to-day. He had returned from an inspection trip over the Frisco lines with B. L. Winchell, president of the principal roads of the system; A. J. Earling, head of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway, and Percy C. Rockefeller.

Mr. Yoakum declined to make a statement about his inspection trip so far as it may result in a traffic agreement between the Frisco and St. Paul systems.

"There seems to be but little stock ticker prosperity in New York, but there is a good deal of real prosperity in the Southwest," he said. "After crossing the Mississippi River one rarely hears the New York stock market referred to. Trading in securities is not the business of the

West, and securities listed on the stock exchange are not the collateral required or generally used by bankers in the West. . . ."

(Three paragraphs of quoted matter follow.)

III. Interview in which direct quotation is varied with indirect. From the Chicago *Evening Post:*

"The Panama Canal will be completed at least a year sooner than the time set for the official opening, Jan. 1, 1915," said Ray L. Smith, employment agent of the Isthmian Canal Commission, to-day.

Mr. Smith is in Chicago attempting to enlist boilermakers to take the places of the hundred men who resigned after being refused an increase in wage.

"I attribute the reduction in time to the efficiency which has been attained by the men," he continued. "When the work began laborers were imported from the West Indian Islands and from Italy and Spain. The European laborers accomplished nearly three times as much a man as the West Indians at first, and they were paid twice as much.

"Now the efficiency of the West Indian has been so increased that the European is only twice as effective."

According to Mr. Smith, the personnel of the workers on the canal includes representatives from nearly every country in the world. There are 45,000 employés of the commission in Panama. Of them, 5,000 are Americans. The remaining 40,000 represent perhaps more tongues than were gathered around the Tower of Babel. The bulk of the laborers are negroes from the Barbados, from Trinidad and from Jamaica. Besides the negroes from these islands there are Spaniards from most of the islands except Cuba.

"The death rate in the canal zone is only 4.05 a thou-

sand persons," said Mr. Smith. "This is lower than in any American city. The low rate is the result of the careful supervision exercised by the government. For example, there is a hospital at Culebra, the headquarters of the commission, which has 2,200 beds. All the houses are screened against mosquitoes, and in other ways the greatest attention is paid to sanitation. . . ."

(The rest of the interview is in direct quotation.)

(Note that the writer drops direct quotation in the fifth paragraph. Making it clear that the speaker is his authority, he puts his information in the third person. This may be done with a plain statement of facts and figures in which there is no expression of opinion. Nothing would be gained by putting in the speaker's words the statistical matter here given. On the other hand the reporter should be careful to quote anything of a controversial nature.)

IV. The following paragraphs from a feature story in the New York *Mail* show the questions-and-answers method in the interview. The extract is from a signed story, the only kind in which the reporter is permitted to write in the first person:

"Evidently," I said, "you are an admirer of the new woman, the woman who earns her living."

"Well," he said, "you can't blame me. It's always better to get business advice from a woman who knows something about business, than from one who knows noth-

ing about it. For women are bound to meddle with their husbands' affairs, whether they are acquainted with them or not."

"And how about politics?" I ventured. "Should women take an active part in this field, too?"

"Decidedly not," he returned, etc.

(Signed newspaper stories are the exceptions. In the average story, when the writer has occasion to refer to himself, he uses some such impersonal form as "the reporter asked" or "it was suggested.")

CHAPTER X

SPECIAL TYPES OF STORIES

The test of the news value of an event is its element of novelty. Whether news shall be the record of things admirable or things disgraceful practically depends on the community. In the early days of Dodge City, Kan., or Leadville, Colo., the information that Cherokee Jake or San Juan Bill had attended church would have been news. But in these communities at the present day the weekly presence of many citizens of equal or greater prominence has no news value. In which city would the rabbi rather live, the one where church attendance has news value, or the one where it has none? — From an editorial in the St. Louis *Republic,* replying to a critic of the daily press.

While every news story, in the nature of the case, presents its own problem, the news writer soon finds that in all the stories on the same basic theme, as those dealing with fires, certain definite points must be covered. It is impossible, of course, to provide a set pattern for any story or group of stories, but a few general instructions will be found to hold good.

FIRE STORIES

In covering an important fire story, in addition to any special news features, get the following facts:

Exact location; time; cause; names of owner and occupants of building; losses; insurance.

If possible, see the owner to learn the extent of the damage to the building; otherwise get the fire chief or some other person who can speak with authority to estimate the loss.

If persons were killed or injured, or lives were endangered, get all the details possible. These facts take precedence over all details concerning property loss. Don't forget names and addresses. Among the points to be noted are: Rescues; exits and fire escapes, or absence of fire escapes; other precautions, or lack of precautions, against crowding and panic; thrilling, humorous or pathetic incidents; circumstances affecting the work of the firemen, such as a possible failure of the water pressure at a critical time.

DEATH STORIES

In death stories give the following: Full name; age; time and place of death; cause; account of last illness; funeral arrangements; names of relatives; birthplace; account of business and political life; society and church connections.

Let your story be simple and dignified, in keeping with the theme.

WEDDING STORIES

In stories of "big" weddings give the following: Full names of the persons married; their family connections; time and place of wedding; minister officiating; attendants of all kinds; descriptions of gowns of bride and attendants (it isn't necessary to say the bridegroom wore the "conventional black"); music; decorations; reception; guests from out of town; presents from organizations and groups of friends; noteworthy presents from individuals; wedding trip; when and where the couple will be at home.

CRIME STORIES

In covering a story of murder or suicide, don't stop with the facts that appear on the surface — get the motive. When one hears that a friend has killed himself the first natural inquiry is: Why did he do it? It is this question that the city editor urges upon the reporter starting out to cover the story. "Get the motive" is the order, expressed or implied. If the story does not show the motive, it must have other marked elements of interest to receive more than a few lines of space.

It is not within the scope of this book to discuss

newspaper ethics and ideals, except in relation to news writing, but attention may be called briefly to that phase of the newspaper's daily problem that has to do with crime news. Whether or not such news is "featured" depends altogether on the newspaper's individual policy; there are no general standards that fit all cases. A story that one paper cuts to a few lines or throws away may be "played up" in another to the extent of a column or more. Any newspaper will give liberal space to a story that vitally concerns the entire nation or community, such as the attempted assassination of a public official. Divergence comes in the treatment of human-interest news. Take for example the story of a shop girl who kills herself because she has been jilted. Here is a story that may be developed for its human-interest features, may be dismissed with a bare statement or may be ignored. The theory is widely accepted that the publication of a suicide story, especially one that goes into detail, may implant the suggestion of suicide in persons of morbid mind, or may lead those who have been thinking of suicide to act. It is largely for this reason that many newspapers give little space to news of this character unless it concerns someone of prominence or contains some unique human-interest feature.

Ordinary, routine suicide stories receive bare mention at the most, and then usually in an inconspicuous part of the paper. What shall be done with a story is the editor's problem. The problem of the reporter is to get the facts and present them to the best of his ability. And if a suicide story is to be covered in detail, don't stop with the obvious — find out the "why" of it all.

BUSINESS STORIES

In stories dealing with business transactions, especially court reports, it is particularly important that the reporter get the names right. "Brown and Co." may be the name of one corporation and "the Brown Company" of another. Don't confuse the two.

Don't call a firm bankrupt simply because a petition has been filed asking that it be declared bankrupt. Wait until the case is decided in court.

In general — and this cannot be stressed too much — remember that the reporter has power to do irreparable harm by a careless or malicious statement. An unwarranted aspersion may work an injury that no subsequent correction can wholly undo. A statement in print is final; it cannot be amended or softened as can the spoken word. It

is part of the news writer's plain duty — to himself, his newspaper and the public — to choose his words carefully, in order that no misconstruction may be placed upon them. More important still, he should never forget the obligation that rests upon him to say no thing, directly or by implication, that can harm an innocent person.

SECOND-DAY STORIES

The second-day story, as the name suggests, relates a development in a story printed the preceding day, of which it is assumed the reader has some knowledge. For example, the story of a death, if deemed of sufficient importance, may be "followed" (as the newspaper vernacular has it) by an evening contemporary. But while the account first published begins by telling the fact of the death, the second-day, or the "follow," story is brought up to date in the lead with some newer facts, probably about the funeral arrangements. News ages quickly in these days of hourly editions, when beats are measured not by days or hours but by minutes. The news writer aims to give the latest possible information about his story, and to give it in such a way that the reader will be impressed with the fact of its newness. An experienced reporter will never

write "yesterday" into the lead of his story when there is a chance of making "to-day" prominent.

The morning newspaper, which sends its city edition to press at 2 to 3 o'clock in the morning, tells of the events of yesterday. It is the breakfast-table paper, setting forth the history of the preceding day. Necessarily the word "yesterday" recurs frequently in its local columns. The reporter must write his story to conform to the date of the paper's issue. Hence, writing for next morning's paper of a fire which occurred at 8 P. M., he fixes the time as "8 o'clock last night"— this form being preferred to "yesterday evening." "Last night," however, is avoided in reference to anything that happens after midnight, on the day of publication. In such a case, the reporter, with the conscious purpose of making his news seem as timely as possible, writes "early this morning" or gives the definite time.

An even greater effort to get "to-day" rather than "yesterday" into news stories is made by the evening paper, because its special field is the news of the day on which it is published. Yesterday is dead; its news has passed into history. Taking up the chronicle where the morning paper has dropped it, the evening paper, in successive editions,

records the events of the day. First-page stories in early editions may be ruthlessly cut down or thrown out as more important news develops. It is not enough to tell what has happened already; the newspaper must tell what is happening and what is going to happen. News that appears stale is not wanted. There are so many things of vital interest happening all the time that the newspaper is not concerned with dead events, except as they may have a bearing on the present.

The second-day story, then, if it is worth publishing at all, must have some new feature to bring it up to date. At least it must have the appearance of newness. It is in giving a story this gloss that the tricks of the news writer's trade are called into play. Nowhere does experience count for more than in writing of a day-old event in a manner to convey the impression that the news is being told for the first time. The novice may write vividly of something he has just seen, but the trained news writer excels in the artifice of what the newspaper man calls rewriting.

REWRITING

On some evening newspapers a squad of men begin work soon after the city editions of the morn-

ing papers are off the press. Before dawn these men are on duty, busily preparing copy for the first edition of the paper, which goes to press before news begins to pour in through the regular channels. This work is in charge of an assistant city editor, who paves the way for the city editor. Copies of the morning papers and a pair of shears are his equipment. Stories that promise further development during the day he lays aside for the consideration of the city editor; others that may safely be rewritten and made to appear as new he deals out to the squad of writers; still others, those that are dead after one telling, he throws away. Stories that hold the possibility of a libel suit — or, as the newspaper man says, contain dynamite — are mentally labeled dangerous and held for investigation — or the wastebasket.

Now assume that to the rewrite man is handed a clipping telling of the arrest of a leading citizen for exceeding the speed limit in his automobile the night before. The citizen gave bond to assure his appearance in police court the following day. The story fills, say, half a column in the morning paper. "Cut it to a stick" is the order. The novice probably would begin by saying that "John Jones, cashier of the First National Bank, was arrested last

night for speeding," that being the substance of the lead in the original story. Not so the rewrite man. His story begins somewhat like this:

On the docket of the First District Police Court this morning appeared the name of John Jones, cashier of the First National Bank, charged with exceeding the speed limit in his automobile. Mr. Jones was arrested last night, etc.

Here the news writer has given his story a new lead without in the least going beyond the facts. He knows that an arrest for violation of a city ordinance is followed by arraignment in police court; from the district in which the arrest was made he knows in what court Mr. Jones must appear. It is assumed that the writer is an experienced reporter, acquainted with police procedure in the city in which he works. Later in the day the lead of the story is changed to tell the disposition of the case. Nearly all the stories rewritten from other papers are subject to changes during the day or are thrown out altogether to make way for later news.

Suppose the story tells of a fire in which persons were killed. The fire was in a factory, which, contrary to law, was not adequately equipped with fire escapes. The morning papers told the story in detail. So far as the facts about the fire are con-

cerned, the story is old. The rewrite man, drawing on his knowledge of similar events, begins his story in this manner:

An investigation was begun to-day by Building Commissioner Smith to fix the responsibility for the loss of ten lives in a fire which last night destroyed the paper-box factory of Blank and Company at 1010 Y street.

Then the story tells of the lack of fire escapes on the building and proceeds to give details about the fire culled from the published account. In later editions the lead is changed as developments warrant.

On some evening newspapers the rule is to use the name of the day rather than "to-day," "yesterday" or "to-morrow." The paper can then be dated one day ahead and sent out as a mail edition without the necessity of changing local stories to conform to the new date line.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOME OR CLASS-ROOM STUDY

I. Concisely told story of a fire. From the Chicago *Evening Post:*

Lives of firemen were imperiled and a loss estimated at $35,000 was caused early to-day by fire which swept through the three top floors of a five-story brick building at 2427-31 West Fourteenth street. These upper floors

were occupied by the Platt-Maschek Company, novelties, of which C. C. Maschek is president.

The two lower floors are occupied by C. A. Hiles & Co., Inc., tool manufacturers. This concern escaped with a slight loss.

Starting supposedly from crossed electric wires on the fifth floor, the fire broke through the roof and had spread to the fourth and third floors when it was discovered by Policeman Thomas Feeney, who was passing. Flames and smoke rolled out of the fifth floor windows. Feeney pounded on the front doors of the building and attracted the attention of Edward Claus, a watchman, who was on the first floor and unaware that the building was burning.

The two attempted to ascend a stairway to the third floor, believing that there was another watchman in the novelty concern, but flames and smoke burst through a door and they were compelled to retire. Glass in the door was broken by the heat and Feeney was cut about the face and hands.

A general alarm was sounded and Marshal Horan arrived in his automobile. He sent in five special calls and took charge of the many companies of firemen. The heat was intense and firemen who had mounted the roofs of adjoining structures frequently were compelled to climb down.

While firemen were still at work on the flames about twenty-five girls reported for work. It was said they would be thrown out of work by the fire.

(Notice how the two leading facts in the story are combined in the opening sentence, the fact that firemen were in peril coming first, then the property loss. The writer manifestly has taken pains to get the firm names correct.)

II. Brief news dispatch telling of a death by fire:

NEW YORK, Dec. 12.— Mrs. F. A. Hilliard, 76 years old, a wealthy widow of Milwaukee, was burned to death early to-day in her room in the Hotel Bristol. She set fire to her clothing in attempting to light a candle. Mrs. Hilliard registered at the hotel Nov. 6. She attracted attention by her eccentricities. She refused to use either electric light or gas, and insisted on burning candles in her room.

(All the salient facts are told here in less than seventy-five words — the who, when, what, where and why of the story. This is the compressed form in which the story was carried in the news dispatches. As a local story — that is, published in the city in which it originated — its human-interest element would justify the giving of more details — but nothing of a horrible nature. News, unless it is national in interest, shrinks in importance in proportion to the distance from the scene of the happening. This rule, of course, would not apply in this case to Milwaukee, where the story would be local in significance because of the residence of the woman in that city.)

III. Fire story summarizing the main facts in a few lines, as carried in the report of a press association:

JOPLIN, MO., Nov. 16.— Fire of unknown origin this morning destroyed the entire business section of Duenweg, a mining town six miles east of here. Seventeen buildings were burned, the damage being estimated at $75,000.

(It is significant, in studying relative news values, that this story, dealing with property loss, gets only half as much space as that telling of a woman's death. Both appeared in the same newspaper.)

IV. Death story which covers all the important points. From the Baltimore *Sun:*

ATLANTA, Nov. 13.— United States Senator Alexander Stephens Clay, of Georgia, died of heart disease at the Robertson Sanatorium to-day after an extended illness.

His death was as peaceful as it was sudden. He was talking to his son Herbert when he suddenly ceased speaking and fell back dead.

During the morning and early afternoon the Senator appeared in better spirits than usual. The attending physicians said that he was apparently recovering from the slight relapse of Saturday.

Mrs. Clay came to Atlanta from Marietta in the morning, but when she found the Senator so much improved she returned home. The only member of the family present at the deathbed was the Senator's son Herbert, who is mayor of Marietta.

According to the physicians Senator Clay's death resulted from dilatation of the heart, superinduced by arterial sclerosis. The Senator had been ill for nearly a year and went to the sanatorium on November 1 to take the rest cure. He appeared to be improving until Saturday, when he suffered a relapse which his weakened condition was unable to withstand.

The body was removed to the Clay home at Marietta, where the funeral services will be held Tuesday. Senator Clay was 57 years old, and is survived by a widow, five sons and a daughter, besides his parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Clay, of Cobb county.

(An account of Senator Clay's political life, in 350 words, follows.)

V. Death story in which the cause is of special interest:

CHICAGO, Dec. 5.— Prof. Charles Otis Whitman, head of the Department of Zoölogy and director of the Zoölogical Museum at the University of Chicago, died of pneumonia to-day. His death was due to exposure a week ago, when, late at night, he left his room to look after a flock of pigeons which he had been studying. Friends say that Prof. Whitman feared the pigeons would be frozen.

Prof. Whitman, who was 68 years old, was widely known as a zoölogist. He was born at Woodstock, Me., and was educated at Bowdoin College, Leipzig University, in Germany, and Johns Hopkins University.

Surviving Prof. Whitman are his widow and two sons, Frank and Carroll. Arrangements for the funeral have not been completed.

VI. Graphically told story of the death of a famous "man-bird":

LOS ANGELES, CAL., Dec. 31.— The winds, whose treacheries Arch Hoxsey so often defied and conquered, killed the noted aviator to-day. As if jealous of his intrepidity, they seized him and his fragile flying machine, flung them down out of the sky and crushed out his life.

He fell dead in the field from which he had risen but

a short time before with a laughing promise to thousands of cheering spectators to pierce the zenith of the heavens, surpass his own phenomenal altitude record and soar higher than any other man dared go.

Cross currents, whirled off from a vagrant storm that floated in from the sea, caught his biplane and shot him downward 563 feet to earth.

His body lay broken and twisted almost out of all semblance to a human form. All of the spectators in the grand stand witnessed the tragedy, as it occurred directly in front of them on the opposite side of the course.

They sat in awe-stricken silence until the announcer gave out the words through the megaphone:

"Hoxsey has been killed."

Then from every part of the great stand came sobbing of women, who but a short time before had clapped their hands to the daring aviator as he arose from the field for his fatal flight.

"Of course the success of this attempt is contingent upon the kind of weather I find up there," said Hoxsey just before he left the ground. "Some of the temperatures one encounters in the higher altitudes are simply beyond human endurance. But, if I can stand it and my motor works as well as it has been working, I'll come down with a record of 12,000 feet or more."

Even at that moment the wind attained a velocity that kept more cautious aviators on the ground. After he had ascended it gained rapidly in violence. Moreover, it created a "Swiss cheese" atmosphere, the most treacherous meteorological condition that man-birds have to contend with.

There is nothing by which it may be known why Hoxsey did not go higher than 7,742 feet, which his barograph showed he had attained, but he had apparently encountered at that altitude the same conflicting air currents that finally

overcame him. Notwithstanding this, and with the same reckless daring he had displayed during the last week, he descended by a series of spiral glides, and was performing one of his thrilling rolling dips, when his biplane suddenly capsized and shot to earth.

Over and over the aëroplane turned as it fell, with a speed so swift that of all the thousands who saw the tragedy not one could tell what effort the aviator made to save himself. When the wreckage had been cleared sufficiently so that his body could be reached, he was found planted firmly in his seat, his arms around the levers. The fall telescoped the biplane.

The steel sprocket which drove the propellers lay across Hoxsey's face, the motor resting upon the right side of his body. Every one of the ribs on that side was shattered into fragments. An iron upright, broken by the force of the crash, held the aviator's body impaled upon its jagged point.

The stop watches of the judges in the stand registered the exact second of 2:12 o'clock when Hoxsey's machine turned over and plunged in its fatal fall. The news of the tragedy was telegraphed over wires leading out of the press stand before the machine struck the ground.

(Enough of the published story, which filled more than three columns, is given here to indicate the detailed method of treatment. The death of Arch Hoxsey in itself was a big news story, of nation-wide interest. Its importance as news was enhanced by the fact that another noted aviator, only a few hours before, had met death in a similar tragic manner on another aviation field.)

VII. Story of a suicide printed because of the unusual means employed. (Names and addresses given here are fictitious.) From the New York *World:*

James Wilson, aged seventy, a photographer, committed suicide by drowning himself yesterday afternoon in a tank in his studio at No. 17 Blank street.

Wilson lived at No. 616 R street and was in the photograph business with his son. The studio is on the third floor and consists of three rooms.

Water leaking through his ceiling about 5 o'clock yesterday afternoon attracted the attention of Henry Smith, who has a printing shop on the floor underneath the studio. He sent a workman to investigate and when the man returned and said that Wilson's door was locked Smith notified the police.

Patrolmen Stephens and Jones of the Blank Street Station broke open the Wilson studio door and in the rear room found water running over the sides of a tank used in developing pictures. This tank is zinc lined, is 2½ feet wide, 2 feet deep and 4 feet long, and stands 5 feet up from the floor, the upper edge being only 2 feet from the ceiling. Inside this tank was Wilson's body.

Wilson was 5 feet 2 inches tall and weighed 200 pounds. To reach the top of the tank he evidently stood on a sink beside it, but how he managed to crawl inside has puzzled the police. First, thinking that Wilson might have been trying to repair the tank, the police made a search for repairing tools, but found nothing of the kind. Wilson was dressed in his underclothing, and his outer garments were found hanging on hooks.

The tank had to be chopped down before the body could be removed and taken to the Morgue.

Mrs. Wilson said last night that her husband had acted queerly yesterday and seemed to be brooding because a man whom he had had in his employ for a number of years was to leave him at the end of the week. She said one of their sons committed suicide about seven years ago.

(Observe that the writer gives concrete details. Instead of saying, vaguely, that Wilson, a large man, drowned himself in a small tank, he gives Wilson's height and weight and the exact dimensions of the tank.)

VIII. The following leads show how stories have been brought up to date:

1. ST. LOUIS, Dec. 9.— Colonel Abe Slupsky wears modestly to-day the metaphorical wreath of hops that goes with the championship in beer drinking.

When he drank a bottle of beer in the café at Hotel Jefferson last night it marked the completion of a task begun thirty days ago. Every day since then, Sundays included, nineteen bottles of beer preceded the good-night one. Etc.

2. Search in a snowstorm failed to-day to find the three robbers who held up three men and stole nearly $20,000 in cash and checks on the Egremont trolley extension yesterday. The amount taken was given out as $10,000, but the Woronoco Construction Company stated to-day that yesterday's full pay roll was $20,000, and only a few men had been paid off when the hold-up occurred. Of this amount nearly half was in checks. Etc.

3. BELFAST, Dec. 10.— Political excitement is at fever heat to-day, following last night's riots that resulted from

several Orangemen voting for the Irish Nationalist candidates. Those so voting are being called traitors and their houses are under guard to-day to prevent violence being done them. Etc.

4. Several hundred college boys from the University of Blank crawled from the sheets this morning with dry throats, big heads and a universal tendency toward "never again." For last night was "football night" and the college boys "did things up brown." Etc.

5. John K. Smith, millionaire broker, following his fourth arrest in a month because of his strange antics with automobiles, is in the observation ward of the City Hospital pending an expert investigation as to his mental condition. Smith was arrested yesterday, etc.

6. PROVIDENCE, KY., Nov. 26.— It is believed today that the ten men entombed in Mine No. 3 of the Providence Coal Company by an explosion are dead. . . . A windy shot in the mine yesterday caused a terrific explosion, etc.

IX. Write a local fire story from the following notes, assuming it is to be printed in an evening paper in a town of about 20,000:

Home of A. B. Smith, 600 Converse avenue. Fire discovered at 1 A. M. by neighbors returning from theater. One of them broke in front door with a stick of cord wood and aroused the family, who were asleep on the second floor. Fire had started in the attic from crossed electric wires, and had burned down into the closet in the room occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Smith. Opening the closet to get some clothing, Smith was driven back by flames. His wife fainted and he carried her out. His hands and face were slightly burned. Two children, girls, 8 and 5, were carried out by neighbors. The house, two-story frame,

burned rapidly. Only a part of the furniture on first floor was saved. Loss about $10,000, covered by insurance. Whole building was ablaze when the firemen arrived. Smith is cashier of the Second National Bank. Man who broke in door, A. L. Jones, a grocer, 604 Converse avenue.

X. Assuming that the death of Senator Clay (see No. IV) was first published in the morning papers, rewrite the story in 150 words for an evening paper.

XI. Condense the story of Wilson's suicide (see No. VII) into a telegraph dispatch of 150 words.

CHAPTER XI

THE CORRESPONDENT

Too often the complaint against the newspaper is that it is sensation-seeking and has a predilection for scandal and unsavory gossip. Men and women, including some of eminent rank in their own professions, although having only a slight knowledge of the making of a newspaper, have a habit of saying in their ignorance that newspapers give preference to crime, divorce and scandal. It is even added that it is impossible to get wholesome news into a newspaper.

This opinion is wrong. It not only does injustice to most newspapers, but, in a measure, it offers insult to the readers of those newspapers. As a general thing newspapers give preference to only one thing — news. But news is news only when it relates to something of present interest in an interesting way.— From an editorial in the Washington (D. C.) *Times*.

In addition to getting the service of one of the big news gathering organizations, such as the Associated Press, and maintaining correspondents in the leading cities of the country, the metropolitan newspaper receives a vast amount of material from special correspondents in the cities and towns in its immediate territory. By immediate territory is meant those states in which the mail edition of the paper has its greatest circulation. Chicago papers,

for example, circulate not only in Illinois, but reach into Wisconsin, Iowa, Indiana, Michigan and parts of Missouri, Ohio and Minnesota. St. Louis and Kansas City papers have a broad field in the Southwest. The newspaper's function is to give all the important news of the nation and the world, and to give besides the special news of that section of the country which it serves. It is to the end that news within this territory may be covered, or covered more fully than it would be by a national news gathering organization, that the paper maintains a corps of special correspondents.

A special correspondent is in effect an out-of-town reporter for the paper he represents, working under the direction of the telegraph editor just as the local reporter works under the city editor. The only difference is that he is not in as close touch with his chief as the local man. Though now and then he may get a definite assignment by wire, he works largely on his own initiative. This is added reason why he should cultivate a "nose for news" and the art of writing news. A mistake made by wire is usually harder to correct than a mistake made in the office. Time is lost and unnecessary expense incurred if the correspondent sends in a slipshod story about which the office has to ask questions.

The correspondent is as much an agent of the paper as the local reporter. He is responsible for all the news in a given territory, and if wide-awake and efficient he can do much toward increasing the prestige of his paper in his community.

WRITING FOR THE WIRE

The general rules that govern all news writing apply with equal or greater force to the telegraph story. So far from taking an unworthy advantage of his comparative freedom from supervision, the correspondent should feel perhaps even more keenly than the local reporter the news writer's obligation to be absolutely fair and accurate. It goes without saying that he should be concise, because the newspaper pays for every word that he sends over the wire. On the other hand he should never sacrifice clearness to save a few words. Few newspapers want their dispatches skeletonized — boiled down, that is, by the omission of such words as "the" and "of." If the dispatch is skeletonized intelligently, the editor in the office can easily supply the missing words, but most newspapers consider that any saving effected in this way is more than offset by the loss of time in editing the story. Unless a newspaper specifically states that it wants its news in

skeleton form, the correspondent should put it on the wire exactly as he would like to see it in print.

In estimating the value of his story to the paper he serves, the correspondent should never let his personal interest in the doings of his own community bias his judgment. A story that is worth a column of space in his local paper may be of no value whatever to a paper published 100 miles away. In "sizing up" a story let the correspondent imagine himself a stranger, in the community for the first time. What would be of interest to him? What, in other words, is of more than purely local concern? Not the fact, surely, that a new sidewalk is being laid on Elm street. That is a matter in which the residents on Elm street, Smithville, may be vitally interested, but it has no news value outside of Smithville. The correspondent who makes a newspaper pay tolls on trivial items is certain to get a peremptory order to stop sending, and if he is not an authorized correspondent, the telegraph tolls may be charged back to him.

No newspaper worthy of the name will knowingly print fake stories. If for no other reason than self-interest, the correspondent should hew close to the narrow line of truth, for the faker cannot hope long to escape detection and dismissal.

Neither should the correspondent try to win favor by inserting in his stories "puffs" of persons to whom he feels indebted for information. The writer who seeks to use the columns of a newspaper for personal ends is unfaithful to the trust reposed in him as the newspaper's agent. Newspapers are in the business of buying and selling news. They want the facts that are news — and the facts only.

SOME PITFALLS TO BE AVOIDED

"Remember," the Chicago *Record-Herald* tells its correspondents in a pamphlet of instructions, "that while news is always truth, the truth is not always news." Essentially the same warning is given by other newspapers. While it applies partly to matters of trivial importance, it is intended chiefly to put the correspondent on his guard against stories that are forbidden by good taste or decency. When a gossipy individual approaches a correspondent and whispers that he has something "that will make good reading," the chances are he will tell something that no reputable newspaper would print. The writer should beware of malicious gossip and unfounded rumors. Things that are merely rumored are not news. No newspaper cares to give space to libelous matter and no newspaper that is

edited on right principles will intentionally print anything that will injure the reputation of an innocent person.

The *Record-Herald* thus states some of the pitfalls that are to be avoided:

"If John Smith leaves town and Mrs. Jones precedes or follows him, thereby causing local scandalmongers to intimate that they have eloped, don't send it; the chances are that the gossip is false, and in no way can a correspondent do more irreparable damage.

"If John Smith has been financially hard up and suddenly disappears, suffering, perhaps, severe mental strain, don't send a dispatch that he is an absconder or an embezzler. He may be neither.

"Or if John Smith be removed from some position of trust, and his employer has seen fit to put experts at work on his books, don't jump to the conclusion that John is a defaulter, and don't send a dispatch that he is under suspicion. Facts, not suspicions, are news.

"Be careful never to confound the name of the plaintiff for that of the defendant, or vice versa; nor the name of a person making an arrest for that of the person arrested; nor the name of a lawyer for that of the client whom he is defending — in short,

remember that it is reprehensible, if not actually libelous, to accuse any person of anything that some other person stands accused of.

"Never draw conclusions adverse to conduct or character; never comment upon the facts. Let the facts themselves tell the whole story.

"Carefully scrutinize and consider any court news affecting business standings or business transactions. Ex parte statements filed in court are always one-sided, sometimes malicious, and may be libelous. Not infrequently such statements are filed in the hope that they will find their way into print and thus damage the credit or reputation of the person assailed. The fact that such a statement or petition has been filed does not necessarily justify publication.

"Be wary at all times of stories affecting the professional repute of doctors, lawyers, preachers and members of other professions largely dependent upon the esteem in which they are held.

"Shun, whenever it is possible, all stories affecting the characters of women."

WHAT NOT TO SEND

Here are some of the things that most newspapers include in their lists of what not to send:

1. Trivial accidents, such as the breaking of an arm or leg by machinery, unless the person hurt is of wide prominence.

2. Insignificant robberies or burglaries.

3. Murders in which the persons concerned are obscure or in which there is no element of mystery.

4. Unmentionable offenses, breach of promise, abandonment and similar cases. If, however, the circumstances are very unusual, send the facts guardedly, but only the facts that can be verified through judicial proceedings. "Such stories," the Chicago *Tribune* adds, "should be handled with extreme care. Where lynching or attempts to lynch follow assaults, that fact should be bulletined immediately."

5. Daily accounts of trials, murder or otherwise, unless specifically ordered.

6. Puffs of individuals, hotels, etc., or any other form of free advertising. No press agent stories are wanted.

7. Obituaries of obscure persons.

8. Marriages, unless the persons are prominent, in which case notice should be sent in advance by mail.

9. Ordinary damage suits.

10. Storm news, unless there is loss of life or great property damage.

11. Condition of crops, except in case of rain, frost or drought at critical times.

12. Ordinary business transactions.

13. Meetings of secret societies, except state or national meetings.

14. Accounts of county fairs or picnics, unless ordered.

15. Abstracts of sermons, unless they contain some striking news feature.

16. Reports of celebrations, unless persons of state or national prominence attend, or of the general observance of Christmas, New Year's or the Fourth of July.

17. Stories of freaks or monstrosities, such as three-legged chickens.

18. School commencements, meetings of teachers' institutes, medical societies, farmers' alliances and the like, in which the interest is purely local.

19. Interviews with "a well-known citizen," "a prominent official" or any other anonymous individual.

20. Theatrical notices, unless they contain some real news feature.

21. Political speeches or gossip, unless ordered.

22. Fatal accidents to trainmen or obscure persons, except where there are two or more fatalities.

This list, while not exhaustive, gives a general idea of what is to be avoided. No set of rules could be drawn up to cover every case with which the correspondent has to deal. To equip himself to give the best service he should not only learn the general principles of news writing, but should study the columns of the newspaper he represents to find out its particular needs. He should remember, too, that no rule is iron-clad. A story falling under any head of the foregoing classification may possess some extraordinary feature that will make it worth printing. In that case the correspondent should be careful to build nis story around the unusual part.

Most newspapers rely on a news gathering organization for stories of railroad wrecks, big fires, floods and the like. The correspondent should never duplicate a story of this kind that he knows will reach the newspaper through another channel in time for publication. If, however, an event is of unusually grave importance, or if it happens at a late hour, the chances are that a special dispatch will be required, and the correspondent should send a bulletin of the facts immediately. Alertness in fur-

nishing bulletins of important news is always appreciated. The correspondent should never under any circumstances duplicate a story to two newspapers in the same city.

WHAT TO SEND

A careful reading of a list of "Don'ts" will give the correspondent a fair idea of what the newspaper does want. In addition he should remember that nearly every newspaper has a hobby — a fondness for a certain class of news of which it makes a specialty. This hobby may be the gathering of news that will help along the cause of good roads, or statistics of Fourth of July accidents, or sporting news; whatever it is, the correspondent can make it a source of profit.

The Cincinnati *Enquirer,* for example, is particularly insistent that its correspondents keep it informed regarding sporting events. The Chicago *Tribune* includes in its book of instructions a list of "Tribune Specialties." These are:

Unique statistics.

Cigaret stories, legal, legislative, deaths, insanity, etc.

Animal stories — by mail.

Unique hunting and fishing stories — by mail.

Interesting personalities about men and women in the public eye — by mail.

Odd photographs.

Scientific discoveries.

Stories of romance — by mail.

Short human-interest stories, things that will bring smiles or tears to men and women everywhere, are always in demand. It is a perverted notion that all newspapers are eager to get so-called scandal news. The "cleaner" the story, the more likely it is to be printed.

For a newspaper published, say, in Chicago, events involving residents of Chicago have a special value beyond their ordinary worth as news. In such cases street addresses should always be sent.

Advance notices should be sent by mail of weddings of prominent persons, of coming elections and political conventions of all parties, and of all meetings in which there is more than local interest. If predictions as to the outcome of an election are desired, go to the political leaders; the personal opinions of the correspondent are not wanted.

Stories of important business transactions and movements in the industrial world are nearly always acceptable.

If the newspaper you represent uses illustrations, don't overlook an opportunity to get good pictures. Photographs illustrating important news stories should be mailed at the earliest possible moment. Use special delivery stamps and wire the newspaper that you have mailed a package which will reach the city at a certain time.

SPORTING NEWS

Special instructions regarding sporting matter are given by many newspapers. Note the following:

Never take sides in controversies.

Send pictures of the winners of important sporting events.

In sending summaries of trotting meetings, always observe the newspaper's style.

Do not send accounts of prize fights between men of only local reputation, except in case of death or severe injury. Send to the sporting editor by mail advance notice of all important contests, and if possible send photographs of the fighters in advance.

Be absolutely sure of your facts before stating that a record has been broken.

Never say that a contest is for the championship of a city, county or state, or any other championship, when such is not the case.

Watch for general news features. For example, if a spectator is killed at a baseball game, say so at once. Never bury facts of general interest under a story that will interest only those who read the sporting page.

Be prompt. The sporting page as a rule goes to press early, and stories are often left out, especially on Saturday nights, because they reach the office too late. File stories of Saturday afternoon events as soon as possible.

HOW TO SEND

The correspondent sends his story in one of three ways — by telegraph, mail or long-distance telephone.

Practically all news of immediate interest is sent by telegraph. Assume that you are the correspondent of a morning newspaper and at 5 o'clock in the afternoon have a story of a fire and panic in a theater, in which five persons were killed and twelve injured. You have plenty of time to send what the newspaper calls a query — a brief dispatch setting forth the salient facts of the story. Nearly all newspapers require their correspondents to file queries on early news.

An acceptable query in this case would be:

"Theater fire and panic; five dead; twelve injured; five hundred." This means that you are prepared to furnish 500 words on the story. It is unnecessary to say, "Do you want the news?" or "How much?" The dispatch in itself is a question.

Get your story into shape to put on the wire without delay if it is ordered. If it is not wanted, no reply to the query will be received.

Assume that the story is ordered in this dispatch: "Rush three hundred fifty theater fire." That means that the correspondent is to keep his story within 350 words. The fact that a newspaper does not order a story or orders less than the correspondent offers does not necessarily imply that his news judgment is questioned. Stories that ordinarily would be used may be crowded out by a rush of news of greater importance. One story like that of the San Francisco earthquake and fire will cause the omission or rigid condensation of news that usually would be "featured." Sometimes the correspondent's story is not ordered because the facts are covered in the reports of a news gathering organization as fully as the newspaper desires.

After the date line at the beginning of your story write the time of filing, thus: "Centralia, Mo., June 6.— Filed 6:30 P. M." This will enable the

newspaper to fix the blame if the dispatch is delayed. In sending more than one story make each a separate dispatch, with date line and signature.

For morning newspapers file all day news as early as possible, but instruct the telegraph operator not to send until 6 P. M., when the night press rate, which is cheaper than the day rate, goes into effect. Promptness is essential. News matter received after 11 P. M. is likely to be thrown away unless of great importance.

Never write a "blind" query, such as "prominent citizen killed" or "horrible accident." State plainly and specifically what your news is. It is especially important that the correspondent observe this rule in sending late news of comparatively small happenings. Much can be compressed into a hundred words. If it is too late to order more, your dispatch — in this case a compressed news story rather than a query — can be treated as complete in itself.

HANDLING THE BIG STORY

The rules that apply to the sending of the early story may be waived when the correspondent has late news of big, vital importance. The main thing then is to get the story into the office, and get it

there as quickly as he can. The Cincinnati *Enquirer* says: "Never postpone sending in a good piece of news. Get it to us somehow, no matter at what hour the event may occur. Remember that a few words of an item to-night are worth more than a column of the same to-morrow night." That is a good rule for the correspondent. Do not delay sending news in the hope that it will be allowed greater space if you hold it a day.

Assume that you have the story of a railroad wreck in which a dozen passengers were killed. You are sure the story will be wanted. It is 10 o'clock at night. There is not time to query and get instructions. As soon as possible send a brief bulletin, telling what the news is and about how many words you will have. Then begin to send the story at once. Don't wait until you have completed the story before handing it to the telegraph operator. Give him the lead and write the story as he works. Send the big facts first, then the details. Write simply and naturally, without padding.

If you cannot get to a telegraph wire, do not hesitate to use the long-distance telephone. Have your facts well in mind so that you can tell them without an expensive waste of time. A big story may be rushed into type for the city edition of a

morning newspaper as late as 2:30 o'clock or even later. News that is important enough to warrant "making over" the first page or the issuance of an extra edition is available up to 4 or 5 o'clock.

Evening newspapers, as a rule, are essentially local in character, and hence use less special telegraph matter than those published in the morning. But a big story is a big story at any hour of the day or night, and if it develops in time for day publication the correspondent of an evening newspaper should use every effort to get it in. The St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* says: "In the early hours of the morning — say up to 10 or 11 o'clock — a brief bulletin on any important news item will be sufficient; if the telegraph editors want more they will notify you by wire. But after that hour the *Post-Dispatch* would rather have too much of a good thing than not enough. Remember that the Home Edition — the principal edition of the *Post-Dispatch* — is practically closed to its correspondents at noon. If anything BIG happens in your locality about that time, rush it to the *Post-Dispatch* without any preliminary notification. Do not hesitate to 'take a chance' at any time if you believe you have something that the *Post-Dispatch* would like to know about."

SENDING BY MAIL

Feature stories, which are as interesting at one time as another, obviously should be sent by mail. To what extent the correspondent should use the mails for matter of more immediate interest depends somewhat on the instructions he receives from his office. As a rule, early news matter for a morning newspaper should be sent by mail if the correspondent is sure his letter will reach the office by 10 o'clock at night. If news of great importance is mailed, wire the office to that effect, telling what train your letter is on. Most newspapers furnish special envelopes to their correspondents for use in mailing stories. Don't hesitate to use a special delivery stamp in mailing important news. It is often possible for the correspondent to send news in advance by mail, to be held until a dispatch is received from him releasing the story for publication. A speech or a report of which the correspondent has an advance copy may be handled in this way to save telegraph tolls and time.

For the evening paper, stories of the late afternoon or night may be sent by mail when the correspondent is certain they will reach the office early

in the morning. But an important story, which depends for its interest on immediate publication, should never be entrusted to the mails when there is any likelihood that it will not be received on time. In brief, the correspondent should strive to get all worth-while news for the paper he serves and get it to his office first.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Below are some general instructions that hold good for the correspondent of any newspaper, in any territory:

1. Don't send more than ordered.

2. Keep the local telegraph office informed of your address and telephone number, so that messages may be delivered to you at any time.

3. Get a substitute to do your work when you are temporarily absent from town. Have him sign dispatches with your name to avoid confusion in accounts.

4. Make it a point to keep on friendly terms with the telegraph operators. They can often be of great service.

5. Write your dispatches plainly.

6. If possible, use the typewriter in preparing stories to be mailed.

7. Never send letters or photographs by express. The express companies deliver only during the day.

8. Study the style of the newspaper you represent by comparing your stories as sent with the stories as printed.

9. Spell out round numbers in dispatches.

10. When an extract from a speech or a document is sent by wire, indicate the beginning of the quoted matter with the word "quote" and the end with the words "end quote."

11. Incur any legitimate expense in getting important news and photographs. If possible, however, query the office and get instructions before doing so.

PAYMENT

The correspondent is paid on the basis of matter used. Rates vary, but the average is $5 a column, usually estimated at 1,500 words. Extra payment is allowed for exclusive news. A few newspapers require correspondents to send in at the end of each month a "string" of their published stories, but the majority keep an account with each correspondent by means of credit tabs showing the date of each story, the name of the sender and the number of words.

CHAPTER XII

COPY READING

If that change occurs (a return to smaller newspapers) there will be an increased demand for the services of the man who possesses not the common ability to make a story long and diffuse, but the rare talent of making it short, vivid and complete. There is hardly a newspaper office in the country in which the difficult and admirable art of compression has not been to a greater or less extent neglected in recent years.—From a lecture by HART LYMAN, editor of the New York *Tribune*.

The copy readers on a metropolitan newspaper do the work that is commonly associated with the word editor: they "blue-pencil," or edit, the news copy. Tradition has equipped the editor with a blue pencil and has made it a symbol of editorial callousness. In reality, the copy reader is much more likely to use a soft black pencil with which a word may be cut out at a single stroke or an illuminating word inserted in broad, unmistakable characters. The copy reader takes the story as it comes from the reporter and puts it through a refining process. His work is critical rather than creative. It is destructive so far as errors of grammar, vio-

lations of news style and libel are concerned. But if his sense of news is keen, as that of every copy reader should be, he will find abundant opportunity for something more than mechanical deletion and interlineation. He may insert a terse bit of explanation to clear away obscurity or may add a piquant touch that will redeem a story from dullness. To the degree that he edits news with sympathy and understanding, with a clear perception of news values, his work may be regarded as creative. If, on the other hand, he conceives it his duty to reduce all writing to a dead level of mediocrity, if his ideal of editing is merely to wage war on the split infinitive and substitute "obtain" for "secure," no matter what the sense, he richly deserves the epithet that is certain to be hurled at the copy reader by the reporter whose fine phrases have been cut out — he is in truth a "butcher" of copy.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE WORK

The efficient copy reader has a good working knowledge of the English language; he has a highly developed sense of news; he knows the style of his paper; he is content with nothing short of accuracy. To write headlines, he must have

primarily the knack of putting the gist of a story into a few short, simple words. With all these qualifications he may yet fail if he is not able, when occasion demands, to work swiftly. It follows that he should keep in touch with current affairs and should lose no opportunity to add to his stock of knowledge of the city in which he works. The name of the Secretary of the Interior, the latest development in a famous will case, whether a thoroughfare is a street or an avenue, the initials of the county recorder — all such details can be found in the files of the newspaper or in reference books, but the copy reader can save valuable time if he has them filed away in his memory. New words are constantly coming into general use and new ideas are demanding expression. The copy reader must keep abreast of the big movements in science, in politics, in all the fields from which news stories are drawn. The right attitude toward his work was shown by a copy reader who, when ballooning first gave evidence of becoming a popular sport, went to the public library and looked in the index for "aëronautics." He got the best book he could find on the subject and studied it. He learned the principles of ballooning and its special vocabulary

and when stories of the new sport began to come to him, he was able to "blue-pencil" the copy intelligently.

ORGANIZATION OF COPY READERS

The number of copy readers depends, of course, upon the size of the newspaper. Small-city papers may have no men employed solely for this work. On the larger papers the staff of copy readers averages perhaps six or seven, while some offices use as many as a dozen or more. These men are said to comprise the "copy desk," and all news copy, in theory at least, passes through their hands. On some papers the staff is divided, part reading telegraph copy under the telegraph editor and part working in the local room under the city editor. Other offices have adopted the newer plan of the combined desk, where both telegraph and local copy is read. This desk is in charge of a head copy reader, who apportions the copy among the readers, passes on their work after it is finished, and in general keeps things moving. The head copy reader is in effect a news editor or an assistant news editor. It is his duty to see that neither the local nor the telegraph department "plays up" its stories unduly, but that each story, whatever its source, is

rated at its true value in relation to the other news of the day.

EDITING THE STORY

The work of the copy reader is twofold: (1) to edit the copy and (2) to write the head. Only the first of these functions will be discussed in this chapter.

In brief, the copy reader should hew and polish the story to exactly the form in which it should appear in print. He is a skilled workman, employed to trim away the rough edges. By this it is not meant that the copy reader is expected to give the story the grace and elegance of literature. He should give it, if it has not already, grammatical exactness, freedom from ambiguity, and the force that goes with direct, simple statement of fact. This is the groundwork of the copy reader's task — to make the story correct in form as in fact.

Less obviously, he must make the story conform to style — not only to the general laws of news writing, but to the special, arbitrary style of the newspaper for which it is written. Every good newspaper has an individuality, expressed partly in what is rather vaguely termed its style. The general style of a newspaper, its habitual attitude to-

ward news, can be learned only by close observation of its columns. Specific rules, however, are laid down to cover the more mechanical aspects of style, such as punctuation and capitalization. No two newspapers agree in all the details of style. In giving an address, for example, the word "street" may be printed St., Street or street. Capital letters are used sparingly by some papers, liberally by others. Ages may be spelled out, as eighty-one years old, or the figures, 81, may be used. Style determines the method of giving titles: it may be "the Rev. William Jones" in one newspaper, "the Reverend William Jones" in another and "Rev. William Jones" in a third. "Program" or "programme" may be the form required. All such rules, which the newspaper makes in order to get uniformity, are usually embodied in a style-book, issued for the guidance of both the editorial and the mechanical department.

Compositors, as a rule, follow style as regards capitalization and like details, no matter how the copy is marked, unless the specific direction "follow copy" appears in the margin. Proofreaders, too, are instructed to observe style. It is always desirable, however, that copy when sent to the printer should be correct in every detail. The lino-

type operator loses time if he is compelled to read ahead to supply a missing word. Mistakes that get into type are marked by the proofreaders and corrected, but all this takes time and increases the cost of composition. The ideal piece of copy has every word and every punctuation mark correct. This is the standard, as regards mechanics, toward which the copy reader should strive. Sometimes, when he is working under pressure, he may find it impossible to correct any except the glaring mistakes. Here enters the factor of time. When a big story comes into the office only a few minutes before time for going to press, the copy reader cannot afford to hesitate over a misplaced comma; his first concern is to get the story to the printers, with the facts straight. Incidentally, it is a good general rule that the copy reader should not make a change in a minor detail of style unless he is sure he is right. When in doubt about a comma, omit.

Just what is meant by style may be seen from the following extracts regarding the use of figures from newspaper style-books:

"When an indefinite sum is mentioned, do not put in figures, as a dollar, about a hundred dollars, a million dollars, millions of dollars, etc."—Chicago *Record-Herald.*

"When figures are given in round numbers, say 1 million dollars instead of $1,000,000; also ¼ million for 250,000; ½ million for 500,000; ¾ million for 750,000. Also 'The attendance was ten thousand'; but 'The attendance was 10,375.'"—Kansas City *Star*.

RULES ABOUT LIBEL

Only at the price of eternal vigilance on the part of reporters and editors can libelous matter be kept out of the newspaper. No item is too small to contain a potential libel suit; indeed it is the small items that most frequently cause trouble. Routine items, especially those from police sources, should be watched carefully. A story of considerable length that appears dangerous is always closely edited, but too often minor stories, because of their very insignificance, are allowed to slip by the copy desk and into print without thought of their mischief-making possibilities.

A vest-pocket card containing libel warnings and headed "Look at This Every Day," is given by the St. Louis *Republic* to each of its copy readers. First is this note:

"Editors and reporters should never forget that no news article is valuable enough to compensate

for a libel suit. Take no chances. When in doubt, consult the head of your department."

The rules which follow are a good summary of the main facts about libel that the copy reader needs to remember:

"1. Heads are danger points. Never make in a head a damaging assertion which is not borne out fully in the text. Qualify in both to be sure.

"2. Make no assertions against any person's conduct or character unless you are ready to supply complete legal evidence.

"3. Do not draw conclusions adverse to conduct or character. Never leave the plain facts. Let the facts tell the whole story.

"4. Be sure the wrong person is not made to appear. This is often done, either by slips in writing names or mistakes about identity of persons involved. Get every name absolutely right.

"5. Be careful about using names given by unknown persons. It is a common practice for criminals and other delinquents to assume the names of respectable persons.

Dangerous Ground

"1. Court Reports. Any court news affecting business standing or business transactions. Watch

names. Be careful about reporting business failures or embarrassments.

"2. Stories affecting professional repute of doctors, lawyers, preachers and other professions dependent upon personal esteem.

"3. Stories affecting the character of women. Use no epithets or adjectives unnecessarily. Never on hearsay connect a woman with a detrimental action. Watch names.

"4. Statements from one side. This includes petitions in law cases. Never base an assertion on these ex parte statements. Get both sides or say that it is from one side and be careful even then. The fact that a petition has been filed does not necessarily justify publication."

Bear in mind, too, that a libelous statement is not excused by the fact that it is quoted. "It is said," "it is reported" and like expressions scattered through a story are no defense against a suit for damages. The newspaper is responsible for everything it prints. Avoid the libel that lurks in qualifying words. A statement otherwise harmless may be so colored with adjectives and adverbs expressing disapproval that it will furnish ground for legal action. Let the plain facts tell the story.

The copy reader — in fact, anyone concerned in

the preparation of news matter — will do well to inform himself thoroughly of the laws on this subject.

THE GUIDE LINE

Assume now that you are editing a story to carry what is called a top head (a head used only at the top of a column). In the upper left-hand corner of the first page the city editor or the head copy reader has written a guide line naming the story and designating the size of the head. This is the "slug" by which the story is identified in all the processes through which it passes from the copy reader into print. The guide line, for example, "Fire No. 2," is set in caps at the head of the story and remains there until the story is placed, with its head, in the position allotted it by the make-up editor in the type forms. Any identifying word may be used to name a story, but no two stories should bear the same "slug."

The guide line, of course, is not intended to appear in print, its purpose being merely to facilitate the handling of the story. But as lines designed only for office information have a way of slipping into the paper in the hurry of making up, the copy reader should take care, when he "slugs" a story,

to choose some word that will not cause embarrassment if published. It is related that a facetious copy reader once "slugged" a wedding story with a view to furnishing amusement for the office force. The next morning the proprietor of the newspaper, who happened to be particularly interested in the wedding, and a hundred thousand or more other readers saw, between the headlines and the story proper, in bold-face capital letters, the amazing line: "Suicide No. 3." The printer who made up the page had neglected to throw away the guide line. Since then the copy readers on that paper have taken care to "slug" stories discreetly.

The text of the story is put into type on one or more linotype machines, while the top head, at least part of which generally must be set by hand, goes to another department of the composing room. For this reason the guide line that appears on the story must be duplicated on the copy for the head, in order that no mistake may be made in assembling the two. A story that carries a minor head, which may be written in the clear space left by the reporter at the top of the first page, need not be "slugged" unless there is some special reason for labeling it.

The guide line is used to bring together all the stories that go into one department. Thus all items

intended for the sporting page are marked "Sport." Sometimes a story is to be followed by one or more related stories. Take for example the account of a widespread flood, of which reports are received from several towns. The story which is to come first is marked "Lead Flood" and all other items bearing on the same general subject are labeled "Follow (generally abbreviated to "folo") Flood." If "folo" items are to appear in a set order, they should be marked "First Folo," "Second Folo," etc. The term "folo" should not be confused with "add." An "add" to a story is tacked on without a break, while a "folo" is a separate story, with its own head. A dash somewhat shorter than the regular news size is used before the "folo" and usually the head is of a special type to indicate the dependence of the story on what has gone before.

In the example given above, "Fire No. 2," the numeral shows the style of head to be written. Heads are numbered or lettered, each office having its own system. Usually the most important head is called No. 1 or A, the next No. 2 or B and so on. A ring is drawn around the guide line, or any other direction to the printer, to show that it is not a part of the text.

MARKS USED IN EDITING

Having noted any directions marked on the story, the copy reader proceeds to the business of making it ready for publication. With an eye to detect imperfections, he goes through the story, adding a word now and then for the sake of clearness, attacking bombast and obscurity, transposing misplaced words and phrases, perhaps even picking up a feature from the end and putting it in the lead.

The beginning of each paragraph is plainly indicated, either with the paragraph mark (¶) or in the manner shown in the illustration. Short paragraphs are favored as an aid to the reader's eye. Seldom is a newspaper paragraph longer than twenty lines, or about 150 words; the conservative Springfield (Mass.) *Republican* sets a limit of 400 words. Follow the style of the newspaper in this respect.

When several words are cut out of copy, it is a good practice to bridge the gap with a curving line connecting the ends of the matter which is left standing. By following this line with his eye, the compositor is enabled to skip rapidly over the omitted portion. Never leave a single word standing marooned with a long deletion on each side.

Wreck No. 2

¶ Blankville, Mo., Sept. 19.--~~One of the most~~ Three persons were killed and fifteen injured in a ~~disastrous wrecks the Blank Road has had for some time~~ head-on collision on the Blank Road ~~occurred this morning~~ about 20 miles north of this city this morning. Passenger train, No. 33, north bound, ~~passenger which is~~ due here at 8:15 a.m., and an extra freight train ~~meeting~~ came together on a curve ~~in a terrible head-on collision, resulting in the killing of three persons and injuring about 15.~~ The dead are: Robert Smith, of Moberly, Mo., fireman on the freight; Henry Jones, a farmer, of Queen City, Mo., and William Brown, a traveling salesman, of Keokuk, Ia.,

The passenger train was crowded with ~~happy, care-free~~ excursionists going to Baker Creek, where a reunion is in progress.

The crew of the freight train ~~claim that~~ say they thought to-day was Sunday, and as No. 33 does not run on Sunday they believed that they had a clear track.

MORE

Specimen Page of Edited Copy.

Scratch out the word and rewrite it at the beginning or the end of the erasure, where there is no chance that the type-setter will overlook it.

Use the caret mark (∧) to denote an insertion. Three horizontal lines drawn under a small letter indicates it is to be set as a capital; a diagonal line through a capital from left to right makes it a small letter. A ring around an abbreviated word means it is to be spelled out. But if there is any danger of misunderstanding (as in the case of "Co.," which may stand for county or company), write out the word as you desire it set. Vice versa, a ring may be drawn around a complete word to show it is to be abbreviated. To make the period plain it may be encircled, or a small cross (x) may be used instead. An inverted caret mark (∨) is sometimes drawn under an apostrophe to distinguish it from the comma. The same method may be used to make quotation marks stand out plainly. Two short parallel marks are used for a hyphen and a single longer line for a dash. Transposition is denoted by lines as illustrated in the cut.

To run two paragraphs together draw a "run-in" line from the end of the first to the beginning of the second paragraph. When a page ends on a sentence but not on a paragraph, draw a diagonal

line from the last word to the lower right-hand corner and a line on the next page from the upper left-hand corner to the first word. Make the paragraph sign at the end of a page when it closes with a paragraph.

Never write up and down the page in the margin. If what you have to insert cannot be written between the lines, put it on another piece of paper and paste it in the copy at the proper place. Lines written the vertical length of the page are sure to make trouble for the copy cutter, who cuts the copy into small "takes" for the linotype machines. The operator, too, is bothered by having to stop and turn the page so he can read it.

See that the pages are numbered and that the story is closed with an end-mark. Any mark that plainly denotes the end will answer the purpose. Some of the symbols used are "30" enclosed in a circle, a cross made of parallel lines and a mark like the letter H. A common error in copy reading is the omission of quotation marks at the end of quoted matter; be careful on this point.

In general, copy should be marked with a view to simplifying the work of the printer as much as possible. Too many marks are worse than too few. Never put the printer's ingenuity to the test by an

intricate maze of lines to indicate a transposition; if there is any chance of confusion, cross out and rewrite. Neatness in copy is desirable, but it should never be allowed to stand in the way of making the intent of the writer perfectly clear. Anything to be omitted should be crossed out so unmistakably that there will be no possibility of its being set. Be equally careful not to cross out too much.

ADDITIONS AND INSERTIONS

Not all stories come to the copy reader completed. As press time draws near, important stories are taken from the reporters page by page and rushed to the composing room. No confusion need result if the copy reader marks each piece properly. Assume that you are handling a late wreck story, which is coming to the copy desk bit by bit. The first installment sent to the printers is "slugged" "Lead Wreck," or perhaps simply "Wreck." At the end be sure to write the word "more." This informs the copy cutter, who receives the copy in the composing room, that the story is still running. The second installment should be marked "First Add Wreck," the next "Second Add Wreck" and so on, the word "wreck" being repeated each time. At the end of each installment up to the last the

word " more " should be written plainly and the last should be closed with an end-mark.

Often the process is somewhat complicated by the necessity of making insertions in the story. Matter to be inserted is generally lettered, as " Insert A Wreck," " Insert B Wreck," etc. If possible, the point at which the insertion is to be made should be noted on the copy, as " Insert A Wreck after first paragraph." Otherwise, the place should be designated on a proof sheet. At the close of the " insert," as the trade slang has it, write " End Insert."

The terms " A Copy," " B Copy " and so on are sometimes used to mark sections of a story which are sent over in advance of the lead. The copy reader then designates in the lead where these sections are to be placed. For example, he may write at a certain point, " Here pick up and insert B copy," and at the end, " Pick up A copy." An " add " may be sent out with the guide line, " Add Fire, lead to come," but when the story is broken up into several parts it is simpler to use letters as indicated.

" Turn rule for add " is sometimes written at the end of a story when more is expected. This means that an inverted rule, which in proof shows as a

heavy black line, is to be placed after the story to indicate it is incomplete.

A story is marked "Head to Come" when for any reason the copy for the head is not sent to the composing room with the text. A story intended for publication in a certain edition is so marked, as "First Edition," "Rush for Home Edition," "Up-State Edition." Often a story is brought up to date with a new lead after running through one or more editions. This matter should be "slugged" "New Lead," and the changes marked on a clipping of the story or a proof sheet. "Must" on a story indicates that under no circumstances is it to be killed.

Not infrequently the copy reader keeps two or even three stories moving in sections to the composing room at the same time. While he is waiting for an "add" to a fire story, he may edit the first installment of a dispatch from Washington, prepare an "Insert Murder" and in the intervals write heads and take care of several small items. The example is extreme, but it illustrates the condition of stress under which the copy reader often works. To seize and retain the main facts of a story, so he can write the head after the copy has left his hands, he must keep his mind keyed up to the highest notch

of efficiency. Names above all must be closely watched. A moment's wandering of the attention may lead to the statement in a headline that Jones killed Smith, when in fact Smith killed Jones. Plainly the day of the irresponsible "Bohemian" in journalism is at an end; the modern newspaper demands clear-headed, alert, dependable workmen.

THE LIGHTER SIDE

Copy reading has its lighter side. Gems of unconscious humor come to the desk over the wire, through the mails and now and then from the "cub" reporters in the local room. Witness the following, taken verbatim from a story that did not get into print:

> Patrolman Prim of Twelfth District Station suffered two broken knuckles of his right hand, when he struck Charles Wilson, of No. 2324 B street, yesterday afternoon on the nose. Wilson resisted arrest and the fight followed. The latter's nose was slightly scratched, and is held at the station.

A volunteer correspondent wrote:

> Sneak theaves made away with the contribution box Sunday eavning just after there had been a liberal donation from the congregation of some fifty dollars at the Methodist Church.

It seams that no one was paing eny atenshion to the countribution box after the colexion was taken.

It setting in easy reach of a good many on the alter.

The person or persons that speited it away was very boald as well as slick, at eany rate it was taken while the congercation was still in the house.

Some say they think they know who took it and there will be a clost watch on them for the next fiew days.

A suburban correspondent contributed this:

John Angel, the man who was rescued from a horrible death last Thursday night by being killed by a passenger train, passing over his body, by Fred Anderson, is yet in a very serious condition but is somewhat improved from his condition on Friday.

THE COPY READER'S SCHEDULE

On a printed form the copy reader keeps a record of all the stories he handles, giving the name of the writer, the style of head, the estimated number of words and the time. A sample entry would be: "Jones — Fire — No. 4 — 250 — 8:30," meaning that Jones, a reporter, wrote a 250-word fire story, which the copy reader sent to the printer, with a No. 4 head, at 8:30 o'clock. Such a record enables the editor at any time to trace an offending item to its source.

CHAPTER XIII

WRITING THE HEAD

The art of arts, the glory of expression, and the sunshine of the light of letters, is simplicity. Nothing is better than simplicity — nothing can make up for excess or for the lack of definiteness.— WALT WHITMAN.

Newspapers in Greeley's day were judged by their editorials; to-day they are judged in large measure by their headlines. Big type is associated in our minds with the sensational. The paper that habitually uses scare heads is put down as yellow, while the paper with subdued heads is regarded as conservative in its policies. The distinction does not always hold good: a newspaper with conservative heads may be essentially yellower in its treatment of news than one which spreads a banner across the top of the first page to catch the eye of the possible buyer on the street. But as a rule it may safely be said that the style of heads mirrors in a general way the newspaper's character. It would be going too far, of course, to assert that yellowness is in direct proportion to the size of the

headlines, but it is true in the main that small head letter stands for conservatism and glaring type for so-called yellowness, with the average American newspaper in the middle ground.

Whether or not headlines are an index to news policy, they are one of the most important features of the modern newspaper. Properly written, they enable the busy reader to grasp quickly all the essential facts of the day's news. The head is nothing more nor less than the story in tabloid form. (See Figure 1.) In this it differs radically from the title of a book or a play, which merely suggests the theme. The newspaper head is written to pique and gratify curiosity at the same time.

FIRST REQUISITES OF THE HEAD

The head is an advertisement, and like all good advertisements it should be honest, holding out no promise that the story does not fulfill. It should be based on the facts as set forth in the story and nothing else. The head writer is bound by the same rules as the reporter; neither is permitted to "editorialize" or to draw conclusions. If Smith is merely accused of murder for killing Jones, the fact that space is limited does not excuse the statement that Smith murdered Jones. As the story is qual-

ENGLISH RAILWAY STRIKE IS SETTLED BY LLOYD-GEORGE

Chancellor of Exchequer Hero of Britain, Eclipsing Asquith—Men to Return to Work at Once and No Discrimination to Be Shown.

ARBITRATORS ARE TO DECIDE DIFFERENCES

Representatives of Workmen and Employers in Equal Numbers, With Impartial Chairman, to Have Supreme Authority.

Figure 1.— St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* head. This form of head is well adapted to giving a synopsis of a big news story.

ified so should the head be. A libelous statement in a head is cause for a damage suit, even when the story itself is not libelous.

Like the story, the head should be simple. Here again the short Anglo-Saxon words are the best. Indeed, the head writer is put to the necessity of using short words if he would make the head tell the story. The head is a mosaic. Words must be fitted into a certain fixed space, in such a way that the meaning will not be obscured. This is the head writer's chief problem — to meet the mechanical requirements of the head and at the same time make the thought so plain that none can fail to understand. (See Figure 2.)

A cardinal rule of head writing is expressed in the curt injunction: Get action into the head. Make the head a statement of fact, not a mere label. Never say "Shocking Accident" or "Terrible Fire," but tell what happened as specifically as possible. Try to get a verb in the head, either expressed or implied. This rule, like all others that have to do with newspaper work, is not to be applied literally under all conditions. Exceptions may often be made in handling the feature story. But in nine cases out of ten the best headline is one that

states a complete thought in the simplest possible manner.

TWO HOTEL GUESTS MAY DIE

Others Escape Winthrop Fire in Nightclothes

Some of Them Suffer from Slight Injuries

Loss Is $50,000 on Cottage and Hotel

Beach Section Threatened and Boston Gives Aid

Figure 2.— Conservative type of head, from the Boston *Transcript*. Notice that the second line of each deck after the first consists of a single word.

DEFINITENESS

As many ideas as possible should be crammed into the head. Hence the omission by most newspapers of "a," "an" and "the," and the rule against repeating important words. An article is used now and then to fill out a line, but rarely at the beginning of a line unless it is part of a title. The rule against the repetition of nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs, which is enforced by practically

all newspapers, not only makes for variety in the head, but insures definiteness by compelling the copy reader to seek out descriptive words to fit the idea. For example, the top part of a head chosen at random reads: "Graham to Give Value for Taxpayers' Money." The second deck says: "Banker Candidate Promises to Apply Business Methods to Office if He Is Elected Mayor." Notice that the name Graham is not repeated, but that identifying words are used instead; he is the "banker candidate." The head is thus made more specific and an additional idea is introduced. The statement that he will "give value for taxpayers' money" is amplified and explained in the sentence following.

The copy reader's ingenuity is often put to the test when it becomes necessary to use synonyms in the head to avoid repetition. He should be on his guard against using interchangeably words of similar meaning. To call a modern hotel an inn or a woman a "member of the weaker sex" verges on the ridiculous. A cat is a cat or an animal, never a "feline."

THE QUESTION OF TENSE

Heads are usually written in the present tense unless they relate to a future event. (See Figure

3.) This is the historical present, used instead of the past tense for the sake of greater vividness. "Defies His Accusers" drives home the recency of the occurrence. The reader feels that he is get-

Figure 3.— Four-deck head from the Chicago *Record-Herald;* a well-balanced, typographically neat head built according to a general plan followed by many newspapers.

ting something new. "President Speaks at Albany" means that the President has just spoken, either on the day of publication or the previous day. It is news — the latest thing the President has done

that is of public interest. It must not be inferred from this that the past tense is barred from the head. On the contrary there are occasions when it would be absurd to use anything else. The copy reader would write, "William Smith Dies" or "William Smith is Dead," but in giving details of the dead man's life it would be manifestly foolish to say, "Is Born in Missouri," "Is a Civil War Veteran." While the copy reader must observe the style of the paper that employs him, he is not expected to apply any rule slavishly in defiance of common sense.

The Kansas City *Star* and *Times,* recognized as one of the most carefully edited newspapers, affords a striking exception to the general practice of putting the head in the present tense and omitting the articles. The *Star* prefers the past tense when it can be properly used and encourages sentences with all the articles supplied. For example: "A Tennessee Wreck Hurt 21 — Two Coaches Were Burned, but Sixty Persons Escaped." Most newspapers would have said: "Tennessee Wreck Hurts 21 — Two Coaches Are Burned (or Burn), but Sixty Persons Escape." Without arguing the relative merits of the two types of heads, it is worth noting that the *Star's* departure from custom in

this and other respects has given it a distinct individuality that no reader can overlook. (See Figure 4.)

Whichever tense is used, take care to make the head consistent throughout. Don't switch from the present to the past, or vice versa, without reason.

TWO ROBBERS GOT $10.523

A WOMAN WAS THE VICTIM OF KANSAS HIGHWAYMEN.

Money Intended to Pay Off the Men of the Sheridan Coal Company, Near Pittsburg, Was Taken—Could Have Had $30,000.

Figure 4.— Typical Kansas City *Star* head, using the past tense.

THE MECHANICS OF THE HEAD

The divisions of a head are known variously as lines, decks or banks. A two-line or a two-deck head is one divided into two parts by a dash. The word " line " in this sense means a complete division of a head, no matter what its length in type lines. The top deck, which is set in the largest type, should contain the leading feature of the story. This is amplified and minor features are added in the other parts. Most papers require that each division of a

head shall state a complete thought, having a verb expressed or implied; or, to put the rule negatively, that no sentence shall be continued from one division into another. The other type of head — the running head — is shown in this example from the Cincinnati *Enquirer*, the dashes indicating the divisional breaks: "Pomp — Waits on Humility,— As Dignitaries of a Great Church Bow in Prayer. — Impressive Scenes Witnessed at Music Hall — When Episcopal Triennial Convention Opened."

All heads are made local in their application. The word "here" in the head on an out-of-town story means the city in which the paper is published, not the place where the story originated. Time is given in the head with reference to the date of publication. Thus a story dated May 9, is published in the morning paper of May 10, and "to-day" in the head means May 10.

SOME THINGS TO AVOID

Alliteration occasionally may be used with good effect in a head, but unintentional alliteration — as "Commercial Club Considers Cleaning Contracts" — should be avoided. Slang, unless apt and timely, has no greater justification in the head than in the story.

Some newspapers forbid the head that asks a question, except perhaps on stories of a freakish nature, on the theory that a newspaper's business is to inform, not to ask questions. Others permit the questioning head as a means of qualifying a statement. Thus a report which has not been verified may be headed with a line followed by an interrogation point, as "Revolution in Cuba?" This style of head writing may easily be overworked. Seeing several question marks on the same page, the reader might jump to the conclusion that he had better subscribe for a paper that can tell him something instead of one that appears to deal mainly in rumors.

Another style of head discouraged or forbidden altogether by some papers is the unintentional imperative. This is a head beginning with a verb in the third person plural form, which may be read as an injunction to do something. "Kill Thirty Men" may be the head on a story of an insurrection. It means, of course, "They Kill Thirty Men," but the form, when the subject is not expressed, is also the imperative. Only a few newspapers bar this head altogether, as there is seldom any possibility that it will be misconstrued. An iron-clad rule forbidding it can be justified only on

the ground that the rule is part of a newspaper's arbitrary style.

Trite phrasing should be avoided in the head whenever possible. "Score" and "probe" and "rap" are handy words for the copy reader because of their brevity and are liable to overuse. The head that contains worn-out expressions or that fails to get anywhere is, in the office vernacular,

TAFT UP IN THE MONUMENT

PRESIDENT GOES SIGHTSEEING IN THE CAPITAL.

Rides Up the Tall Tower Along With Some Tourists—Then Visits the Senate's New Office Building and Says He's Having Fun Like an Excursionist.

Figure 5.— New York *Sun* head. The *Sun* style demands that in this head the last line of the third deck shall end flush at the right.

wooden. Woodenness is an unpardonable sin. Try to give the head a swing and an element of originality. (See Figure 5.)

Avoid negative statements in the head. Tell what happened rather than what didn't happen, unless a negation is the feature of the story.

Other things being equal, the active voice is bet-

ter than the passive. "Jones Defeats Smith for Mayor" is preferable to "Smith Is Defeated by Jones."

Avoid the monotony of beginning each division of a three or four-deck head with the same subject. The following is an extreme example of this fault: "She Died To-day — Esteemed Lady Passes Away at Her Home West of City This Morning — She Was 85 Years of Age — She Leaves Five Children and Thirteen Grandchildren." An even more glaring defect in this head is the omission of the name. The reader learns only that "she" died.

Don't build any part of the head on a fact that is tucked away near the end of the story and hence may be pruned off in making up the paper. In handling a story that is likely to be cut down between editions, base the head on features well toward the beginning so that the head will not have to be changed.

SYMMETRY AND SENSE

Each head must be written according to a fixed typographical plan. There is a definite limit to the number of letters and spaces each type line will contain, and the copy reader who exceeds that limit is sure to be reminded, sarcastically, that "type

isn't made of rubber." "Long heads"—heads that will not fit into the allotted space—are a source of vexation and delay if they are not repaired before being sent to the composing room. The copy reader should take pains to make each head fit the pattern before it leaves his hands. Until he has familiarized himself with the heads he must write, he may find it convenient to keep at hand a style card on which is pasted a sample of each head used, with notations showing the number of letters and spaces to be written in the different divisions. Each type line is said to contain so many units, counting spaces as well as letters. All the letters of a line set in "caps" are one unit each, except I, which is one-half, and M and W, which are one and one-half each. The line, "WILLIAM SMITH DIES," contains 17½ units (not counting the quotation marks). A unit beyond the usual limit may be crowded into the line by thin-spacing—that is, by allowing less than the regular space between words. The same system of counting is used for a line set in capitals and small letters, allowance of course being made for the greater width of the capitals.

The head should be symmetrical, but it is not required that it fit the pattern with absolute exacti-

tude. Insistence on mechanical perfection would cause waste of time and might result in hiding the meaning. Sense should not be sacrificed to form. As between a mechanically exact head that is not clear and a head that is less symmetrical but tells the story plainly, the copy reader should choose

Figure 6.— Two-deck head consisting of drop line in caps and pyramid in caps and lower case.

the latter. For each line of a head there is a maximum and a minimum limit, and if the copy reader keeps within these the head will be as near to the standard as can be expected.

Figure 6 shows a two-line head with the top deck set in 30-point condensed Gothic type and the second deck in 12-point Wayside. The top deck here is a drop line: the sentence drops down from one type line into another. The second is called a

pyramid. In writing such a head a word in the first deck should never be divided. In the second deck division is permissible, but the head is better if it can be avoided. Fifteen to seventeen units in each line of the top deck make a symmetrical head, when both lines are approximately the same length. In writing the pyramid the copy reader after a little practice can tell at a glance whether a sentence will fit. Care should be taken not to place an indivisible word where it will cause trouble. For example, if the first line of a pyramid, set with the usual spacing between words, ends on the letter "m" in "Schmidt," the word must be shifted to the second line, with the result that too much white space appears in the first. The dash is generally used to separate distinct ideas in the same deck of a head. (See Figure 5.)

Various arbitrary rules affecting the mechanics of the head are observed by different newspapers, and the copy reader going from one paper to another is likely to find a brand new set of patterns to work by. These mechanical details, however, are easily mastered after one has acquired the knack of putting the story into terse, meaty sentences. The only way to learn how to write heads, after one knows the general principles, is to write them.

SPECIAL KINDS OF HEADS

Overline.— Head over a cut. When the name appears under a cut (this being an *underline*), it is not repeated in the overline, which must be an identifying sentence. "Banker Who Is Running for Congress" and "Woman Who Shot at Burglar in Her Home" are typical overlines.

Box Head.— Head enclosed in a border. Many overlines are set in this way.

Banner.— A headline extending across the top of a page.

Jump or Run-Over Head.— Head used over the continuation of a story that runs over (jumps) from one page to another. Some newspapers require a new head for the jump; others use the top deck of the original head set in smaller type.

Freak Head.— Special type of head used over freakish news stories. (See Figure 7.)

CAN'T FIX PUFFS;
SUES FOR $25,000.

Woman's Shoulder Injured on Street Car and She Asks Damages of Company.

Figure 7.— Freak head from the New York *World*, set in italics to distinguish it from other news heads.

Sub-head.— A head, usually one line, placed within the text of the story to avoid the monotony of an unbroken front of type. Most newspapers use sub-heads in stories running half a column or more. "Two sub-heads or none" is the rule in some offices. A sub-head is based on the paragraph immediately following.

CAPITALIZATION

Type, in the printer's vernacular, is *upper case* (capital letters) and *lower case* (small letters). A word that is capitalized is said to go *up*. A word not capitalized is put *down*. When both capitals and small letters are used in a line, it is said to be in *caps and lower case* (abbreviated l. c.). A line set in capitals is *all caps*.

The general practice is to capitalize all nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs and interjections in the head, as in the title of a book or play. This is a detail left to the compositor, who is guided by the newspaper's typographical style.

CHAPTER XIV

DON'TS FOR THE NEWS WRITER

A vast deal of the slipshod and prolix stuff which we are compelled to read or to listen to is, of course, born of idleness. When, as so often happens, a man takes an hour to say what might have been as well or better said in twenty minutes, or spreads over twenty pages what could easily have been exhausted in ten, the offense in a large majority of cases is due, not so much to vanity, or to indifference to the feelings of others, as to inability or unwillingness to take pains.— From an address, "Culture and Character," delivered before the University of Aberdeen by the RIGHT HONORABLE H. H. ASQUITH.

The following list of "Don'ts" has been compiled from a considerable experience in reading newspaper copy and in directing the work of students in journalism classes. Practical application is made of some of the principles discussed in preceding chapters:

1. Don't think it necessary to call a child a "tot."

2. Don't hesitate to repeat a name for the sake of clearness. Too many personal pronouns lead to confusion.

3. Don't say a wedding "occurred." Things occur unexpectedly; they take place by design.

4. Don't use "loan" as a verb. The verb is "lend."

5. Don't say "Smith graduated," but "Smith was graduated." A school graduates its pupils; they are graduated.

6. Don't say "a number of" when you can avoid it. Nothing could be more vague. Try to give the exact number or at least an approximation. "Several" is usually better than "a number of."

7. Don't advertise a particular revolver or other manufactured article by naming it in your story, except for special cause, as when this information may furnish a clew to a person's identity. Also it is seldom desirable to give the caliber of a firearm.

8. Don't use "amateur" when you mean "novice." An amateur is not necessarily unskilled; he is simply not a professional. An unskilled beginner is a novice.

9. Don't make the mistake that appeared in this published headline: "Audience of 5,000 See Aëroplane Flight." An audience hears; spectators see.

10. Don't spell "forward," "backward," "to-

ward," "homeward" and similar words with a final "s."

11. Don't use stories that are not fit for any member of any family to read. If a mob makes such a demonstration against a man accused of criminal assault that the story has to be covered for that feature, a mere hint will be sufficient to cover the revolting part.— From the St. Louis *Star* Style-Book.

12. Don't use "burglarize." The dictionary contains no such word.

13. Don't say "he had his arm cut off." That means literally that he got someone to perform the operation of cutting off his arm. Say, in case of accident, "his arm was cut off."

14. Don't say "Smith sustained an injury." To sustain is to bear up. Say he "suffered an injury."

15. Don't use "over" in the sense of "more than." Say "more than 300 persons heard the lecture."

16. Don't use "party" for "person." "Party," outside of legal documents, means a group of persons.

17. Don't leave out essential words, trusting that the copy reader will be able to guess what you

mean. The omission of the little word "not" may cause serious trouble. Whenever possible go over your story carefully before turning it in.

18. Don't use a word in different senses in the same paragraph.

19. Don't use "state" for "say." A statement is formal. Most persons merely say they are going fishing.

20. Don't divide a word at the end of a page.

21. Don't fail to read your story in print and note the changes that have been made. Don't make the same mistake twice.

22. Don't use "purchase" for "buy," "remainder" for "rest," "portion" for "part" or any long word when a short one can be found.— From the Springfield (Mass.) *Republican* Rules.

23. Don't confuse "beside" and "besides." "Beside" is never anything except a preposition; "besides" can also be used as an adverb, in the sense of moreover.

24. Don't use "female" for "woman."

25. Don't confuse "plurality" and "majority." A winner in an election has a plurality over his nearest opponent; he has a majority if his vote exceeds the combined vote of his opponents.

26. Don't use two or more words where one will

do as well, as "put in an appearance" for "appear."

27. Don't overwork the word "secure." It is often loosely used where "get," "obtain," "procure," "collect" or some other word would more exactly express the thought.

28. Don't say "tried an experiment." Experiments are made.

29. Don't say "the above statement." "Above" is an adverb; "foregoing" is the right word here. You wouldn't write "the below statement."

30. Don't say "at the corner of Ninth street and Broadway." "At Ninth street and Broadway" is sufficient unless you desire to specify one of the four corners.

31. Don't use "suicide" as a verb. Say "he killed himself" and tell how.

32. Don't use a foreign word or phrase when English will answer the purpose — and it nearly always will. "A dollar a day" is better than "a dollar per diem." Don't mix languages, as in "a dollar per day."

33. Don't say "fifty people were present." Use "persons." "People," according to Webster's Dictionary, means primarily "the body of persons who compose a community, tribe, nation or race;

an aggregate of individuals forming a whole; a community; a nation"—as "the people of the United States." "Persons" refers to individuals.

34. Don't say "united in marriage" or "joined in the holy bonds of matrimony." Say they were "married."

35. Don't use "depot" when you mean "station." A depot is a storehouse for freight or supplies; railway passengers arrive at a station.

36. Don't call a fire a "holocaust" or a "conflagration" unless circumstances warrant. Consult the dictionary.

37. Don't call the wife of Dr. Jones "Mrs. Dr. Jones." She is simply Mrs. Jones. A woman does not gain a title by virtue of her husband's rank or profession.

38. Don't make a practice of using a man's occupation as a title, as in "Barber Smith." He is "Smith, a barber." Certain exceptions are permitted by most newspapers, as in "Policeman Riley."

39. Don't fall into the habit of describing every bride as "blushing," or every five-dollar bill as "crisp" or every gold piece as "bright, new."

40. Don't say "among those present were . . . and others." Leave out "and others."

41. Don't tell the reader "this is a pathetic story." If it is, he will find it out for himself.

42. Don't overwork "well-known" and "prominent." In revolt against a long line of "well-known grocers" and "prominent saloon keepers," some newspapers have prohibited the use of these words altogether in referring to persons. It is always better to identify your characters specifically. Tell how a man is prominent.

43. Don't say "Jones was present at the meeting and spoke." Of course he was present. Simply say he spoke.

44. Don't call a dog a "canine." "Canine" is an adjective. You wouldn't call a cow a "bovine."

45. Don't call a body found in a stream a "floater."

46. Don't use "lady" for "woman" under the impression that you are paying a compliment. "Woman" is a good, stanch word at which no real woman can take offense.

47. Don't write anything in violation of confidence.

48. Don't say "an old man 80 years of age." It's sufficient to say that he is "80 years old."

49. Don't say "5 o'clock P. M. yesterday afternoon." Say either "5 P. M. yesterday" or "5

o'clock yesterday afternoon," according to the style of your paper.

50. Don't write "at an early hour this morning" when "early this morning" will do as well.

51. Don't say "completely destroyed." "Destroyed" is sufficient.

52. Don't say "he was presented with a gold cane." "A gold cane was presented to him" is the correct form.

53. Don't say "the money was divided between Smith, Jones and Brown." It was divided among them. Use "between" in reference to two only.

54. Don't overwork "that." Some newspapers favor its omission in indirect discourse when the meaning is plain without it, as in the sentence: "He said (that) John was his friend." Never omit, however, at the sacrifice of clearness.

55. Don't call every girl pretty. If a girl is pretty, you are usually justified in telling something more about her.

56. Don't say "less than fifty persons were there." Use "fewer." "Less" refers to quantity, "fewer" to numbers.

57. Don't make a collective noun plural unless you mean to convey the idea of plurality. The word "audience" is singular when you mean the

audience as a unit. It is plural when you have in mind the individuals that compose the audience, as "the audience waved their hats."

58. Don't call a policeman a "minion of the law."

59. Don't use "enthuse." There is no such word.

60. Don't waste your energy on trivialities.

61. Don't use "illy" for "ill," which may be either adjective or adverb. "Illy" does not exist in good usage.

62. Don't overwork "very." Through abuse the word has lost much, if not all, of its force. "He's a very good man," as spoken, usually gives the idea that he is only passably good. "He's a good man" is stronger. Be sparing in the use of superlatives.

63. Don't use dialect to the disparagement of any nationality. Don't use it at all unless you are sure of your ground.

64. Don't color your story with modifying words that imply approval or disapproval.

65. Don't write 300 words when you are told to keep your story within 100.

66. Don't say "at the present time." Say "at present" or "now."

67. Don't say "Miss Smith presided at the piano." She merely played the piano.

68. Don't say that "this town was thrown into a state of great excitement," "business was entirely suspended," "a great sensation was created," or any other of the conventional things. They are usually untrue and never interesting.— From the Chicago *Record-Herald's* Instructions to Correspondents.

69. Don't speak of "tasty" decorations. They are tasteful.

70. Don't fall into a groove in sentence building. Seek variety. A series of three or four sentences each beginning with "the" is monotonous.

71. Don't begin a story with "there is" when you can find a better way.

72. Don't try to show superior knowledge by writing above the heads of your readers. News writing should express, not conceal, thought. Leave stilted phrases for the campaign orator.

73. Don't use technical terms that are not generally understood.

74. Don't say "he plead guilty." The past tense of "plead" is "pleaded."

75. Don't use "further" referring to distance; the right word here is "farther," as "a mile farther

east." "Further" should be used in other senses, as "further, he said, etc."

76. Don't say "partially" for "partly." "Partially" means with prejudice. A building is partly of brick.

77. Don't use an abbreviation that can be misunderstood.

78. Don't say "a man by (or of) the name of Smith." Say "a man named Smith."

79. Don't confuse the words "prohibition" and "temperance."

80. Don't say "the then governor." "Then" is an adverb.

81. Don't begin a sentence with figures. Spell out, or re-cast the sentence.

82. Don't say "his whereabouts are unknown." "Whereabouts" is singular; so also "politics."

83. Don't say "in our midst."

84. Don't use "inaugurate" for "begin." A movement is begun; a president is inaugurated.

85. Don't abbreviate names, as "Geo." for "George," "Jno." for "John," etc.

86. Don't contract "all right" to "alright." There is a good word "already" (not of the same meaning, however, as "all ready") but "alright" has no justification.

87. Don't say "one of the most unique." "Unique" expresses an absolute condition; it has no degrees.

88. Don't use an apostrophe before the "s" in "its" (possessive of "it"), "hers," "ours," "yours," "theirs." "It's" means "it is."

89. Don't use "don't" when you mean "doesn't." Be careful to place the apostrophe between the "n" and the "t."

90. Don't call every little flurry a panic.

91. Don't write "capitol" when you mean the seat of government — the city. The building is the capitol; Washington is the capital of the United States.

92. Don't say "he walked a distance of a mile." Omit "a distance of."

93. Don't begin your story with a general statement such as "a terrible accident occurred last night." Tell what really happened.

94. Don't forget to use quotation marks at the end of quoted matter.

95. Don't write it variously "street," "Street" and "st." Find out the style of your paper and stick to it if you would gain the good will of the copy reader.

96. Don't try to save money for the office by

crowding your copy on a sheet without margins. Leave plenty of white space at the top and the bottom so the sheets can be pasted together.

97. Don't say "he secured a position as janitor." Most persons simply get jobs.

98. Don't make the mistake of the reporter who wrote of a "three-cornered duel." A duel (from the Latin duo) is a fight between two persons.

99. Don't speak of a climate as "healthy." Persons are healthy, places healthful.

100. Don't use "gentleman" for "man." "Gents" is atrocious.

CHAPTER XV

NEWSPAPER BROMIDES

Contrary to the opinions of many, the newspaper has saved its readers from that modern perversion of our already forcible English, slang. It has pruned its language of affectation, fine writing and indiscriminate and excessive use of adjectives.— From an address by the REV. WILLIAM B. NORTON, of Evanston, Ill., as reported by the Chicago *Evening Post.*

If a reporter is lazy or inclined to "fine writing" he has only to reach into the grab-box of his memory to draw out a word or phrase, all ready to his hand, that seems to suit the occasion. Was the horse running fast? Then it was going at "break-neck speed." Did the young woman who was pulled out of the river fall in love with her rescuer? Then "her gratitude melted into love." It was the "old, old story." She became his "blushing bride" and the news of the marriage was to the discarded suitor "like a bolt from a clear sky." "A host of friends" attended the "nuptials" and the "happy couple" were "showered with congratulations."

Handy, cut-and-dried expressions will creep into copy unless the reporter is always on the alert to

find the right word. Many of the figures of speech in this category doubtless possessed charm and piquancy at one time, but through long usage they have sunk to a meaningless level. They have become part of the stock in trade of the "fine writer," who seeks to confound the reader with large words. Other words and phrases are merely trivial or in poor taste. The news writer should study to fit his words exactly to the meaning he intends to convey, instead of lazily giving way to the temptation to draw on a ready-made stock.

"Bromides" is the name given by the newspaper man to this stock of handy expressions. The term is thus defined in a bulletin issued by a metropolitan newspaper for its copy readers: "A bromide, in a newspaper office, is a word, phrase or expression, or turn of style, that is especially lacking in originality — overworked, hackneyed — a 'chestnut.' The daily travail of the editor and the copy reader is in scouting for errors of grammar and skirmishing with inaccuracy and awkwardness. But it is a massacre of libel; a war of extermination against bromides."

The following list of "bromides" includes both trite and grandiose expressions which the news writer will do well to avoid and the copy reader to

eliminate if they are passed on to him. The list is intended to be only suggestive of the evils of "bromidic" writing. It is far from exhaustive. Almost any newspaper man could add similar expressions which have come within his experience:

admiring friends
agent of death
ancestral domain
and many others
angry mob
arch culprit
avenging justice

battle-scarred veteran
beautiful and accomplished
bereaved widow
better half
beyond peradventure of a doubt
big mogul (locomotive)
bleeding, mangled form
blunt instrument
blushing bride
body of the deceased
bolt from a clear sky
bonds of matrimony
bosom of the briny deep
bourne from which no traveler returns
brand from the burning
breakneck speed
break the news gently
breathless silence
burden of bluecoats
burly negro
busy marts of trade

carnival of crime
catch of the season
caught like a rat in a trap
caught red-handed
certain party (for person)
challenge contradiction
checkered career
city bastile
city's fair escutcheon
clutches of the law
commercial emporium
conspicuous by his absence
contracting parties (in marriage)
conventional black
cool as a cucumber
cowering poltroon
crisp ten-dollar bill
crowded to its utmost capacity
culminated in the nuptials
cynosure of all eyes

Dan Cupid's dart

dastardly assassin
day of reckoning
delicious refreshments
demure miss
devoted slave
devouring element
diabolical outrage
divine (for preacher)
divine passion
dull, corroding care
dull, sickening thud
durance vile
dusky damsel
downy couch

ebbing life blood
effected an entrance
eked out a bare existence
elegant creation
entered a state of coma
evening repast
exigencies of the occasion
extended heartfelt sympathy

facile pen
failed to materialize
fair sex
fair women and brave men
fateful words
feast of reason
feathered songster
fell design
festive occasion
fever heat
few and far between
fiery steed
first fall of the beautiful
fleeting breath
foeman worthy of his steel
for it was none other than he
formulated a design
fragrant Havana
frenzied finance
furtively secreting

gathered to his fathers
general public
genial boniface
gilded youth
goes without saying
grand old party
gratitude melted into love
great beyond
grewsome spectacle
grim reaper
groaned under the weight of toothsome viands

hairbreadth escape
happy benedict
heartrending screams
hied himself
high dudgeon
high road to recovery
host of friends
human freight
hungry flames
hurled defiance
hymeneal altar

immaculate linen
in a clerical capacity
inclemency of the weather
inner circles of society

jury of his peers

kind and indulgent father
knights of the grip

large and enthusiastic audience
last but not least
late lamented
launched into eternity
leaden missile
light collation
lingering illness
lion of all social gatherings
little blind god
located his whereabouts
lodged in jail
long sleep (death)
lull before the storm
lurid flames

made good his escape
man of parts
maze of mystery
minions of the law
modicum of notoriety
mourned their loss

natty suit
neatly engraved invitations
neat sum
never in the history of news leaked out
nice manners
nick of time
nipped in the bud
notorious crook and police character

old, old story (love)
oldest inhabitant
one fell swoop
one fine day
own inimitable way

pale as death
pangs of poverty
phials of his scorn
piercing shriek of anguish
pillar of the church
police dragnet
populace was up in arms
portals of his living tomb
portent of evil
prepossessing appearance
present incumbent
presided at the piano
prominent (of persons)
public prints
put in an appearance

quiet home wedding

raging torrent
rash act
recipient of handsome and costly presents

remains (for body)
rendered a widow
ripe old age
rising young barrister
rooted to the spot
rumors are rife
rushed post haste

sacred edifice
sad rites
sad tidings
scene beggared description
seemed to spring from thin air
serious but not necessarily fatal
set the town agog
shook like a leaf
shorn of his accustomed affability
shrouded in mystery
silver-tongued orator
sixteen summers (in giving age)
smoking revolver
snorting iron horse (locomotive)
snug income
sole topic of conversation
spread like wildfire
stepped into the breach
sterling worth and high promise
still evening air
stood aghast
storm king
stung with remorse
succulent bivalve
suicide (as a verb)
summoned medical aid
sustained an injury
swathed in bandages
sweet slumber

thickest of the fray
this mortal coil
tidy sum
tiny tots
tireless vigil
tonsorial parlor
took into custody
took the bit in his teeth
totally destroyed
to the bitter end
tried and true official
tripped the light fantastic

ubiquitous reporter
unbiased probe
under cover of the darkness
unfortunate victim
unique in the city's annals
united in the bonds of matrimony
upholders of law and order

vale of tears
vanished as if the earth had swallowed him up

vengeance his portion
viewed the remains
vouches for the authenticity of

war to the knife
waxed eloquent
weaker sex
wedded bliss
wee sma' hours
weird scene
well-known club man
white as a sheet
wildest excitement
with becoming grace
without fear of successful contradiction
witnesses duly sworn

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